Hafa Adai!

Merry Christmas!

Saipan Tribune

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Spouses of FAS citizens fret about their status. **PAGE 3**

Plans for VA clinic, benefits office moving forward. **PAGE 5**



OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Would you favor the use of nuclear energy as an energy source in the CNMI if it were shown to be safe?

Let your voice be heard!
Go to
www.saipantribune.com
to cast your vote.

86 DAYS without a government budget for FY 2009

INSIDE



Shirtless Obama
Forget the economy. What's got everyone talking is President-elect Barack Obama''s fine first form.

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The Spirit
For Gabriel Macht, there are new and different risks in this modern era of cinematic crime fighting.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 23

CITING $8.7M NET REDUCTION IN REVENUES

Fitial rejects $165.4M budget

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Citing a drop of $8.7 million in the Finance Department's revised revenue estimate, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial rejected yesterday the Legislature's proposed $165.4-million budget plan for fiscal year 2009.



Fitial acknowledged the hard work of both the House Ways and Means Committee and the

See FITIAL on Page 4

> *The Secretary of Finance's revised estimate cannot be ignored, as it would make me irresponsible and I would be neglecting my duties... had I approved this legislation.*
>
> —Gov. Benigno R. Fitial

Local revenue at its lowest since 1994—Inos

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



Inos

Local revenue for fiscal year 2008 is the lowest its been since 1994, according to the Department of Finance.

In a declaration supporting Gov. Benigno Fitial's lawsuit against the federal government, Finance Secretary Eloy Inos attached a statement of revenues and ex-

See LOCAL on Page 4

CHRISTMAS SALES DOWN

Grinch steals Christmas '08 from retailers



By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

The Grinch is doing a number or two on Saipan's stores this Christmas season.

With a few hours left before the clock strikes midnight of Dec. 25, sales of the island's top retailers are at an all-time low as consumers' belt-tightening habits have affected Christmas sales.

J.C. Tenorio Enterprises, Inc., which owns a chain of retail and grocery stores on Saipan, said sales are down by as much as 20 percent this holiday season.

"Year-wise, sales are down

See GRINCH on Page 4

Customers check out the toys for sale at the Dolphin Wholesale store in San Jose.

MARK RABAGO

Local

Fund's investment portfolio still above $300M

But stock market very erratic, says Guerrero

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Retirement Fund's investment portfolio is still above the $300 million mark, but the stock market remains very erratic, according to Fund board of trustee chair Juan T. Guerrero.

"It [stock market] rallies today and tomorrow it drops. We gain today and tomorrow the gain disappears. This is going on almost every other day," Guerrero told *Saipan Tribune.*

The chairman said they can't do anything with the stock market other than restraining the Fund's belt and managing the assets more effectively.

"We're watching the market react and taking a proactive action," he said.

Guerrero said there are a lot of factors that the Fund needs to consider and one of that is the budget plan that was recently passed by the Legislature and is now before Gov. Benigno Fitial for his signature.

The budget, the chairman said, does not address in essence any appropriate funding level for the Retirement Fund.

This insufficient funding by the government, Guerrero said, makes it hard for the board because if they do not react they will, in effect, be allowing the depletion of the Fund's assets.

"If we react to the Legislature, the administration thinks that we are playing politics. So we are caught [between] a hard spot and a hard landing," he added.

In September 2008, the Fund reported that the market crisis wiped out about $30 million of the Fund's investments, but after a few days it cut its losses down to $9 million.

The Fund's investment portfolio was worth $418.75 million in July 2008. This represents about 42 percent of the Fund's accrued liability, which amounts to $987.15 million.

The Fund's assets have been on a downside since 2006. In that year, the central government stopped contributing to the pension program, forcing the Fund to liquidate assets to make pension payments.



HONOR GRADUATE NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
Valedictorian Tarimai Joseph K. Yangetmai delivers his remarks during the 19th Police Cycle Academy graduation rites at the Multi-Purpose Center Tuesday.

CUC sees dip in overtime expenses

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

As predicted, overtime for the employees of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has decreased since September when the Aggreko generators come online.

CUC executive director Antonio Muna had predicted as much in a July letter to the lLgislature explaining where funding for the emergency generators would come from. Based on CUC calculations, the utility believed it could save $308,012 a month in overtime and non-personnel costs associated with having to implement power outages, as well as in fuel and lube costs entailed by using existing, less efficient engines.

Overtime was consistently high during August and September, when brownouts and blackouts were at their worst. During the three pay periods from Aug. 16 to Sept. 13, CUC paid employees $44,689, $50,315 and $53,567 respectively in overtime. Since the Sept. 27 pay period, the highest overtime expense was $33,495.

From the Dec. 22, 2007 pay period to the Nov. 22, 2008 pay period, CUC's total payroll cost was $10,740,807. Of that, 63.1 percent or $6,776,802 went to regular pay while 9.5 percent or $1,024,130 went to overtime pay. Another 27.1 percent or $2,910,685 went to employer's contributions and0.3 percent of $27,466 went to retro pay.

Special ed teachers to earn certification

Public School System special education teachers will soon have the chance to take online certification courses through Park University.

PSS has signed a contract with Park University that allows any PSS special education teacher with an elementary education degree to enroll in the classes in order to receive their certification, said Suzanne Lizama, coordinator for the Public School System's Early Childhood Special Education.

The $50,000 contract allows PSS to cover the teachers' fees related to the course, including registration and books.

Twenty to twenty-five teaches have already enrolled in the certification course, which begins in January. There are five classes and it will take three or four semesters to complete.

Park University also offers bachelors and master's degrees online, although PSS will not be funding those degrees, Lizama said. ***(Kristi Eaton)***

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Has your doctor told you that your total cholesterol level is 200 mg/dL or higher, OR your HDL (good cholesterol) is less than 40 mg/dL?			
Has your father or brother had a heart attack before age 55, OR has your mother or sister had one before age 65?			
Do you have diabetes OR a fasting blood sugar of 126 mg/dL or higher, OR do you need medicine to control your blood sugar?			
Are you over 55 years old?			
Do you have a body mass index (BMI) score of 25 or more?			
Do you get less than a total of 30 minutes of physical activity on most days?			
Has a doctor told you that you have angina (chest pains), OR have you had a heart attack?			

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you're at an increased risk of having a heart attack.

To learn more, visit www.hearttruth.gov
Source: The Healthy Heart Handbook for Women, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (2007).

To learn more, please call the Division of Public Health – Wise Women Project at 234-8950 ext. 2141

The Wise Women Project is federally funded by the US DHHS Office on Women's Health ASIST2010 Initiative.

Spouses of FAS citizens fret about their status

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

The immediate relatives of citizens from the Freely Associated States are very worried about what will become of their immigration status after the federal government takes over the operations of local Immigration in June next year.

Their worry is compounded by the amendments to the CNMI's immigration system, which will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2009. The immediate relatives of FAS citizens are seeking for two-year extension in their status.

Irene Tantiado, president of the United Workers Movement that is helping the FAS citizens with their plight, told Gerson Jackson, Consul General of the Federated States of Micronesia, about this issue in a recent letter.

Jackson recently visited Saipan and met with CNMI Immigration director Melvin Grey and deputy director Tony Sablan as well with UWM and the issue with the IRs of FAS citizens, specifically from the Federated States of Micronesia, who are residing in the CNMI.

The issue, Jackson said, also came up during meetings with legislative leaders as well as with the Gov. Benigno R. Fitial.

"In fact, Governor Fitial personally called Mr. Grey to arrange my meeting with him. I ended up meeting with him and his deputy, Mr. Sablan. I met with the two gentlemen for about an hour. I personally thought it was a very cordial and productive meeting," Jackson wrote to Tantiado.

He said that Grey was able to clarify the "somewhat contentious point that he [Grey] made in his letter to [Tantiado] that only the FAS entities can resolve the IRs/FAS citizens situation in the CNMI when its Immigration system is federalized."

"For the FSM, I reported to him that the fifth year reviews of the amended Compact are ongoing and may be the proper avenue to address/resolve the somewhat stringent five-year residency requirement, but that this will be for the long term as the regulations to implement the immigration federalization are due to take effect early next year," Jackson noted.

He said he emphasized to Grey and Sablan that what the IRs of the FAS citizens in Saipan are seeking is to include them as a special class of non-immigrants.

Such special grant, Jackson noted, is defined by the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act. This would qualify them for a one-year or two-year extension "while the so-called problematic provisions in the amended Compact Treaty are being worked on."

Tantiado said her group is glad that the request for a two-year extension had been discussed but they can only wait for the announcement.

"FAS citizens are getting worried and I have been getting calls from them asking [about the issue]," Tantiado said.

Woman in ice case asks to be released to third party

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

A woman who was earlier arrested and charged with possession of illegal drugs has asked the court to be released to a third party custodian.

The woman, Ying Lian Yao, who was charged on Nov.7, 2008, with one count of possessing ice, asked to be released to the custody of Wang Jian Guo.

She filed the request with Associate David A. Wiseman through her lawyer, Robert Torres.

Guo is the manager of Fei Industrial Co. Ltd., which operates Parliament Bar.

Torres asked the court to have Guo be the defendant's third-party custodian on an unsecured bond of $5,000.

He told the court that Yao will have room to stay at the building behind the bar and that the proposed third-party custodian knows his responsibility to ensure that the defendant appears at all court hearings.

On Nov. 11, the court ordered Yao to post a $10,000 cash bail and required her to appear in court for all scheduled hearings. She was told to surrender her travel documents and stay away from airports and seaports.

Yao was arrested at her home in San Antonio based on a warrant by Associate Judge Kenneth Govendo for 29-year-old Zhang Zhou Fan on Nov. 7, 2008 for illegal possession of a controlled substance or ice. Fan is the defendant's husband.

Record stated that drug enforcement task force operatives followed the vehicle driven by Zhou while on his way to the airport on the night of Nov. 7.

The law enforcement officers, upon conducting a search, found ice between a folded newspaper hidden in the pocket of Yao.

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GRINCH

From Page 1

and Christmas sales are no different. We've suffered a double-digit decrease [in sales], some as much as 20 percent. This has been a very difficult Christmas for us," said corporate special project manager Bo Palacios.

While the company's groceries have been steady, sales at its department stores have been less than rosy.

"We're bringing in our own produce and we're doing very well in stocking it. Before December came along we expected that the department store will be much busier than the market side, but unlike last year there has been a decrease in the former," said wholesale manager J.J. Tenorio.

"We noticed that people's buying habits have changed. They're spending less on gift items and more on groceries [produce, canned goods, meats, etc.]. In fact, our No. 1 items are still produce. Usually clothing and other stuff are usually higher on the list, especially during the Christmas season. But it's been different this year, people are going toward the staples," said Palacios.

He added that with economic uncertainty enveloping the CNMI, people are saving as much as possible and that he has noticed that in people's shopping habits.

"The deals are there, we have our promotions in place. It's just that in any economic recession, people tend to spend less. It's been very difficult."



MARK RABAGO

Customers pay at the cashier of the Dolphin Wholesale store in San Jose.

The hardship is shared by Lollipops owner and general manager Penny B. Hofschneider, who said that sales at the Garapan toy store are down this year.

"As expected, we are seeing weaker sales at Lollipops this month compared to last year. To date we are actually in a good position—1 percent ahead of our December goals. However, in retail, especially in a retail toy store, everything depends on customers spending the last few days before Christmas. This week we have seen much lighter traffic and much less spending than in years past. At the end of the month we expect sales will be anywhere from 7 percent to 10 percent below December 2007 sales," she said.

Hofschneider also echoed Palacios' observation that the local consumers' shopping habits have changed.

"Consumers have definitely adapted to changing economic conditions. Customers spend very carefully looking always at price and at value and are more willing to wait for bargains than in the past. They also spend significantly less per transaction and we see this in both residents and tourists."

Liberty Department Store's sales also are lagging behind last year's numbers, which has forced the Garapan retailer to sell some of their items at cost.

"Customers are really looking for bargains so sometimes we just sell them with big discounts, sometimes with minimal profit. We also try to move old items as fast as we can, even at cost," according to assistant sales manager Elvira Fruza.

She added that the uncertainty of June 2009's federal takeover of the islands' immigration, coupled with the current worldwide economic turmoil, has resulted in the tightening of people's purse strings.

"Last year's sales were still good. Buyers are very conscious this year. They are smart shoppers and they don't buy for the future anymore. They just buy things that they will need immediately," she said.

Fruzal said Liberty has discounted some of its items by 70 percent—the lowest before was 50 percent—just to lure in the customers.

Dolphin Wholesale general manager Ricardo "Ding" Castro said while sales at the San Jose store are also down by as much as 10 percent this Christmas season, he is banking on 11th hour shoppers to boost his bottomline.

He added that unlike previous years when toys and electronics drove Dolphin's sales, this year, stationary and items under $20 are the ones that have become quite popular to the island's suddenly budget-conscious public.

Dollar Days owner Annette Ta said her loyal customers have found a way to bring smiles to their friends and family's faces without hurting their pockets.

Unlike before when toys and other gift items are the store's bestsellers, this year saloon gift certificates and bottles of Noni juice have taken the lead, she said.

"Customers have ran out of gift ideas and since some of them already tried our massage and Noni juice, they've opted to buy them as gifts for family and friends," she said.

At first, Ta was surprised by the development, but that reality finally hit her when less and less of their toys were sold, even if they were 50 percent off.



LOCAL

From Page 1

penditures from 1986 to 2008, showing the CNMI's local revenue for fiscal year 2008 was $158,485,000. This would be the lowest amount since 1994 when local revenue brought in $152,199,000, according to the statement. The fiscal year 2008 number was unaudited and turned in a few months ago.

According to the statement, revenue reached its peak in 1997 at $242.56 million.

"In recent years, however, local revenues have reflected the decline in the Commonwealth's two major industries—tourism and the apparel industry," Inos wrote in the declaration. "Local revenues fell from about $215 million in fiscal year 2005, to about $192 million in 2006, to $163 million in 2007, and an unaudited $158 million in 2008. We are currently discussing a proposed budget for fiscal year 2009 with estimated local revenues of about $157 million. This represents a decline of about 35 percent in revenues from the peak in 1997 and about 27 percent in the last three years since 2005."

Inos said the decline in revenues has impaired the CNMI's ability to provide public services to citizens, including health, police protection, the Public School System, correctional facility and youth protective services.

The Commonwealth Health Center, he notes, is unable to attract and retain necessary medical professionals. The Retirement Fund also is an issue, he said.

"The Government's inability to contribute fully to the Retirement Fund has prompted widespread concern as to the continued viability of the Retirement Fund to meet its obligations over the long term," he wrote.

FITIAL

From Page 1

Senate's Fiscal Affairs Committee in working to pass a budget but said the new revenue projections just don't add up to a workable spending plan.

"The Secretary of Finance's revised estimate cannot be ignored, as it would make me irresponsible and I would be neglecting my duties as mandated by the Constitution and laws of the CNMI had I approved this legislation," said the governor in a letter to Senate President Pete P. Reyes and House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios.

Fitial pointed to two major sources of the revenue decline: Confirmed reports of the closure of three of the four remaining garment manufacturers on Saipan and Northwest Airline's plan to stop the Osaka-Saipan route in March 2009.

"This is a considerable reduction in resources that will not support the implementation of the programs proposed to be funded under the budget legislation," the governor said.

The chief executive urged the Legislature to pass measures to re-implement non-working alternate Fridays (called "austerity Fridays"), implement non-paid holidays, and reduce remittances to the Retirement Fund.

"These cost-cutting measures are critical to meet our constitutional requirement of a balanced budget and to continue delivering services to the people of the Commonwealth," Fitial said.

The governor nixed the proposed budget just one day before the deadline for the administration to act on the bill. Had the governor not acted on the budget, it would have automatically become law.

The Legislature passed the $165.4-million budget for FY 2009 on Dec. 4, 2008. It includes provisions for 10.7-percent cuts against agencies funded by the central government. The proposed budget excludes the self-funding Department of Public Lands, which will get $3.1 million, and autonomous agencies.

Fitial said that, while he recognizes the need to approve a budget for FY 2009 for government operations, Finance Secretary Eloy Inos' revised estimates of this year's revenues compel him to disapprove it as resources have been severely reduced and continue to decline.

Fitial also cited eight sections of the budget measure that, according to him, required his disapproval:

■ Fill time equivalent positions are zeroed out despite the fact that there continues to be at least one existing employee and other pending obligations in the CNMI Government Health and Life Insurance department.

■ The Finance Secretary is required to submit an itemized report on the expenditures for personnel and operations of each Executive Branch department and agency to the Legislature at the end of each quarter.

■ Resident department heads salaries are raised by an additional $9,000 per annum; from $36,000 to $45,000 when no other position is being increased and when division chiefs and special assistants of principal executive departments are capped at $40,800.

■ Specific amounts are appropriated for subsistence allowances for the Superior Court and the Supreme Court with no restrictions on which employment contracts they may or may not apply to, while another section in the bill restricts the Department of Public Health by barring employment contracts entered into on the day after the measure goes into effect.

■ A section of the bill addresses appropriations for the Legislature and provides contradictory provisions that leave one to pick and choose which subsections to follow in administering its administrative provisions.

■ Only $4 is appropriated for the Deportation Fund Program, yet a section in the bill requires the transfer of all Immigration personnel who are not employed by the federal government when the U.S. Department of Homeland Security assumes control of immigration in June 2009.

■ Appropriations for various independent programs that "seems as though the numbers were arbitrarily designated without a full understanding of what is needed."

■ The Northern Marianas College is not appropriated a separate amount for utilities.

Considering the reduction in resources, and keeping in mind that appropriations for the remainder of this fiscal year must be reduced to compensate for funds already spent since Oct. 1, 2008, Fitial is urging the Legislature to pass a bill to reduce the government's current expenses.

Plans for VA clinic, benefits office moving forward

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Officials from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs will be on island starting January to assess the best location for the local VA clinic that will open sometime in 2009.


Coleman

Ruth Coleman, executive officer of the CNMI Military and Veterans Affairs Office, said officials would visit in January to determine locations for the clinic, while another group will visit the island at the end of January or beginning of February to conduct assessments for the Department of Veterans Affairs Benefits office, which will also open in 2009.

"We're going to have people here that work for the federal government, so that it'll be much easier for our veterans to go after their benefits and healthcare," Coleman said.

She said the clinic and office are long overdue.

"Our veterans have earned all this already," she said. "It's only right that the Department of Veterans Affairs, both for health and benefits, come to the actual residence of these veterans."

Right now, Coleman said, only veterans with service-connected disabilities are taken cared of locally on a fee basis, while all other veterans must pay for their ticket to go to the clinic in Guam.

"I just don't think that's right. It's not fair," Coleman added.

Although the new healthcare clinic will be on Saipan, all CNMI veterans will be cared for, Coleman said, because VA physicians and their staff will travel to Tinian and Rota on a regular basis.

Coleman said the number of registered veterans in the CNMI led the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to determine a clinic and benefits office was necessary.

"Everything is data driven," Coleman said. "You've got to have the numbers. It's like a business. You don't come here for just one person. You've got to come here for a lot of people. That's exactly how the Department of Veterans Affairs works."

There are currently 972 registered veterans in the CNMI, 250 reservists and more than 300 active duty service members, Coleman said, adding that she knows there are more out there and urges any veteran to register with the department.

The CNMI is the last U.S. territory to get a VA clinic and benefits office but Palau, FSM and the Republic of Marshall Islands, which all have U.S. veterans, do not have clinics or benefit offices.

Coleman recently returned from Honolulu where she attended a task force meeting chartered by Veterans Affairs Secretary James B. Peake. The task force discussed the future of healthcare and benefit services to veterans in the Pacific Insular areas and the U.S. Virgin Islands.





From the Staff and Management of
McDonald's

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MOBILE CLINIC KRISTI EATON

Gov. Benigno Fitial and Saipan Mayor Juan Tudela tour the new Prevention on Wheels Mobile Outreach Clinic during its unveiling Tuesday at the parking lot of the Commonwealth Health Center.

Military buildup task force agrees to share concerns with OEA

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Legislature's civilian military task force has reached an agreement to share its concerns with the Office of Economic Adjustment regarding the planned military buildup in Guam.

Senate President Pete P. Reyes told *Saipan Tribune* that members of the task force recently met with a representative of the Office of Economic Adjustment at the office of House Speaker Arnold Palacios.

"We had an agreement that we will continue to meet. We will continue to air our concerns, any concerns that we have we are going to share with the Office of the Economic Adjustment because they can be a facilitator with the military," Reyes said.

The Senate president underscored the importance of working with the OEA to wrangle out a middle ground so that the presence of the U.S. military is going to be both an advantage for the military and an advantage to the CNMI.

"So it is going to be a win-win situation for the CNMI," he added.

The House and the Senate recently adopted a joint resolution to create the civilian military task force that will conduct "dialogues with representatives of the U.S. Armed Forces to ensure that the Commonwealth is informed of all matters related to the military expansion in the Marianas."

Senators Paul A. Manglona, Maria Frica Pangelinan and Joseph M. Mendiola are representing the Senate in the task force. Reps. Diego T. Benavente, Edwin P. Aldan, and David Apatang are assigned to work with the Senate task force members.

Reyes said the task force is intended to work with the U.S. military, the Interior Department, the Executive Branch, the Legislature, and the business community to try and coordinate efforts so that any type of impact that the military buildup in Guam and the ripple effects that it will have on the CNMI can be worked out so that its presence is going to be a benefit to the CNMI rather than a burden.

Reyes said they asked the OEA to be a part of the task force so it can assist with anything that they would work on based on the office's experience in the past and in other jurisdictions outside of the CNMI.

"Any working model or format that they have can be shared with us so that, if that is necessary to do the same thing, then we may have to do so," the senator said.

Gov. Benigno Fitial formed a military task force in February 2007 to address the planned U.S. military buildup in the region.

The military buildup in Guam involves the transfer of some 8,000 Marines and their dependents from Okinawa. The program involves using Tinian and possibly Pagan and other parts of the Northern Islands as a military training site.

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January 30 - February 02, 2009, 9 am to 4 pm in ABE Office.

Student Orientation:
February 02, 2009, 5-6:30 pm in D-1

NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE
Adult Basic Education Program
Spring 2009 Schedule

Adjunct Orientation:	January 16, 2009	F	06:00-07:30 PM	TBA
CASAS Appraisal Test	January 05-06 & 12-13, 2009	M-T	09:00-10:30 AM	K-1
			01:00-02:30 PM	K-1
			05:00-06:30 PM	K-1
CASAS Pre-Test	January 07-08 & 14-15, 2009	W-Th	09:00-10:30 AM	K-1
			01:00-02:30 PM	K-1
			05:00-06:30 PM	K-1
CASAS Post-Test	January 20-22, 200	T-Th	09:00-10:30 AM	K-1
For Referred Returning Students			01:00-02:30 PM	K-1
			05:00-06:30 PM	K-1
CASAS Make-Up Tests	January 20-22, 2009	T-Th	09:00-04:00 PM	K-2
Registration for Returning Students:	January 26-27, 2009	M-T	10:00-06:00 PM	ABE
Registration for New Students:	January 28-29, 2009	W-Th	10:00-06:00 PM	ABE
Late Registration:	January 30, February 02, 2009	F-M	09:00-04:00 PM	ABE
Student Orientation:	February 02, 2009	M	05:00-06:30 PM	D-1
Add/Drop for Students:	February 04-13, 2009		08:00-05:00 PM	ABE
First Day of Instruction:	M W F Classes	February 04, 2009 (Wednesday)		
T-Th Classes		February 05, 2009 (Thursday)		
	Saturday Classes	February 07, 2009		
	Sunday Classes	February 08, 2009		
Last Day of Instruction:	May 01, 2009			

This schedule is subject to change. For more information please contact the ABE Office at 234-5498 Ext. 1723 or 1724

This advertisement was paid for from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education.

BOE's opposition to autism bill 'disappointing'—Sablan

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Like many of her colleagues in the House, Rep. Christina Sablan was surprised and disappointed with the Board of Education's opposition to a bill that proposes to develop a state plan for services for people with autism.

Sablan said yesterday that she could not help but think that the BOE Committee on Legislative Intergovernmental Affairs' position only underscores the need for improved understanding.

Sablan said the bill had received strong support from the Autism Society of the CNMI and other advocates, including various healthcare and education professionals.

"The intent of the bill is certainly not to breach PSS' autonomy, or the supersede or negate existing services provided by the Public School System for students with disabilities, including autism," she said.

As caregivers and advocates for individuals with autism can attest, the lawmaker said, "there are significant gaps in existing services and programs for individuals with autism, and a need to integrate and improve such services and programs across all relevant agencies and departments, including PSS."

The House unanimously passed Friday the autism bill, which was introduced by Rep. Heinz Hofschneider.

The legislation will establish the Commonwealth Commission on Autism to study and investigate issues, including the early identification and intervention of autism spectrum disorders, ASD.

Hofschneider stated in the bill that autism is the fastest growing serious developmental disability in the United States and the Commonwealth.

BOE's Committee on Legislative Intergovernmental Affairs chair Lucia L. Blanco-Maratita and Education Commissioner Rita A. Sablan had both opposed the legislation.

Blanco-Maratita and Commissioner Sablan had pointed out that, although the intent to create a commission is commendable, PSS cannot support the bill in its current form.

The two pointed out that the bill seems to circumvent certain local and federal regulations of both education and governmental entities.

"Conflicts could arise because PSS already has policies and procedures in place regarding special needs children," they said.

Blanco-Maratita and Commissioner Sablan also noted that the committee's concern is that many departments within PSS are already burdened with a heavy workload and are short-staffed.

Rep. Sablan said she is hopeful that if and when an Autism Commission is created, the PSS leadership will indeed come to the table and participate in the development of a plan that would be geared toward improving services for students with autism and their families.

"Certainly, PSS' support and assistance would be crucial if the plan is to be successful," Rep. Sablan said.



CHAMBER DONATION CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The Saipan Chamber of Commerce donates about 75 shirts, a number of ball caps, visors, and other items to the Department of Youth Services to be distributed this holiday season. Here, Chamber president Jim Arenovski hands over some of the classic shirts to a representative of DYS.

Asiana Osaka-Saipan flight brings familiarization tour

Christmas came early this year for the travel industry of the Northern Mariana Islands in the form of a 13-member familiarization tour group delivered—not by Santa Claus but—by Asiana Airlines on Monday, Dec. 20.

The group—comprising 10 travel agents, one travel media representative, one Asiana Airlines rep, and one Marianas Visitors Authority-Korea escort—arrived aboard one of the first charter flights of Asiana Airlines between Osaka, Japan and Saipan.

The primary focus of the trip is the development of new Osaka-Saipan tour products and the further development of honeymoon products. The tour group stayed at the Fiesta Resort & Spa and also inspected facilities at Hyatt Regency Saipan, Aqua Resort Club, Palms Resort Saipan, Saipan World Resort, Pacific Islands Club Saipan, and Marianas Resort. The group wet their feet with a bottom fishing cruise, spent Tuesday (Dec. 23) morning enjoying the sand and surf at Managaha Island, explored shopping opportunities at DFS Galleria, took a tour of Saipan's northern historic and scenic sites, enjoyed dinner and entertainment at the Sandcastle Las Vegas-style cocktail show, and relaxed with an evening of karaoke.

"This familiarization tour is especially important to support the twice weekly flights between Osaka and Saipan that Asiana started last Saturday and that are slated to run through March 2009," said Marianas Visitors Authority Managing Director Perry Tenorio. "We must continue to work with our industry partners, as well as our residents and local government, to make sure we offer a competitive and compelling destination to entice travelers."

The tour was supported by several MVA member donations: airfare by Asiana Airlines; ground transportation, Mañagaha Island trip, bottom-fishing cruise and karaoke entertainment by Korea Tour Association of Saipan; welcoming dinner, accommodations, and meals by Fiesta Resort & Spa; lunch by Aqua Resort Club, Palms Resort Saipan, Mariana Resort & Spa; shopping discounts by DFS Galleria; water park passes and dinner by Pacific Islands Club Saipan; and cocktail show by SandCastle Saipan.

The travel agencies represented on the familiarization tour are OK Tour, Segye Tour, Lotte Tour, Naeil Tour, Kaya Tour, Sejoong Tourmall, Tour Baksa, Hyundai Dream Tour, Mode Tour, and Hana Tour. The participating travel media is Travel Post. The tour group was scheduled to depart last night, Dec. 24, at 7pm. ***(MVA)***



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Live-fire training on Farallon

The U.S military will be conducting live fire training on the island of Farallon de Mendenilla on Dec. 29-31, 2008, from 6am to 11: 30pm, and on Jan. 1, 2009, from 12am to 12: 30am.

The general location of this activity will be on the island Farallon de Mendenilla training area (R7201) on 10 nautical mile radius on all quadrants.

Due to the danger imposed by this activity, the Emergency Management Office is advising the public—especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators—to stay away from this area during the time and dates indicated.

For more information, contact the EMO Operations Section at 322-9528 and 322-9529, VHF MARINE CHNL and Single Side Band Radio on 5.205.0.

Distribution of 2008 W-2CM forms

The Division of Revenue and Taxation wishes to inform all CNMI employers that the distribution of the 2008 W-2CM forms and instructions will begin on Friday, Jan. 2, 2009, from 8am to 4pm at the Office of Division of Revenue and Taxation located at the Dandan Commercial Center.

All business and employers are asked to pick up the forms during regular business hours beginning Jan. 2, 2009. The deadline for filing the 2008 W-2CM form is Friday, Feb. 27, 2009 at 4:30pm. ***(PR)***

DEQ brigade sets cleanup

The Division of Environmental Quality cleanup brigade will be picking up trash at San Antonio Beach in San Antonio, south of Pacific Islands Club, on Saturday, Jan. 3, 2009 at 8am. Volunteers will clean until 10am and break for drinks and then continue, if needed.

Brigade volunteers who participated in at least 10 cleanups will receive a brigade cap and those who participated in at least three will receive a green brigade t-shirt.

For more information about volunteering, contact DEQ at 664-8500. ***(PR)***

Kagman High calendar of activities

- Dec. 24 2008 to Jan.4 2009: Christmas break
- Jan. 5 2009 Classes resume

Vendors sought for Puengin Inetnon

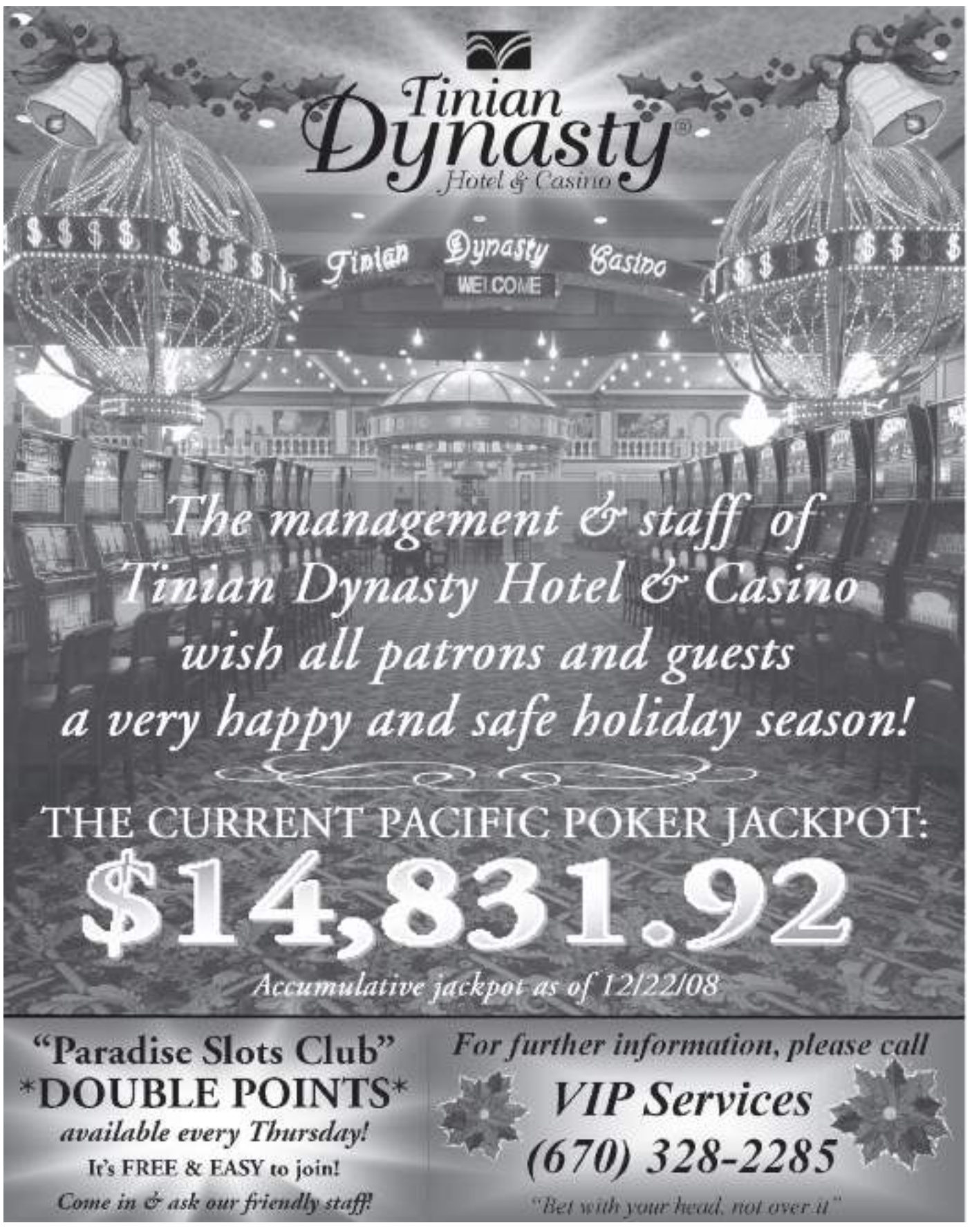
The Kagman Komunidat Association is looking for interested vendors to sell food, clothing, games, and other types of family oriented entertainment for "Puengin Inetnon."

"Puengin Inetnon" is Chamorro for "a night of gathering."

It will be similar to the Thursday Night Street Market in Garapan except that it will be held every government payday Friday at the Kagman Community Center. Interested vendors, volunteers, and performers may call the Kagman Post Office at 256-POST for more info. ***(PR)***

RP resets overseas absentee voters registration/certification

The Philippine Consulate General would like to inform all the Filipinos in the CNMI that as per Resolution No. 8556, the Philippine Commission on Elections has reset the registration/certification of overseas absentee voters from Dec.1, 2008 to Feb.1, 2009, ending on Aug. 31, 2009. All qualified Filipino voters are urged to register as overseas voters or to update their records (if they have previously voted in the Philippines) to enable them to vote during the 2010 Philippine presidential elections. ***(PR)***



Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

December 25, 2002

'Grinch' casts spell on NMI

It's probably the last thing CNMI taxpayers want to hear on Christmas Day but Gov. Juan N. Babauta could no longer put off reporting the sad news: Tax rebate/refund checks will not be released for the holidays. This comes following the failure of the government and the Bank of Guam to zero in on an agreement on the $19-million loan for the payment of rebates/refunds. Babauta and Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente yesterday apologized for the government's failure to have the checks out by Christmas, but assured that other potential sources are being looked at to meet the overdue rebate/refund payments.

Disaster food stamps for Rota OK'd

The U.S. Department of Agriculture gave the people of Rota a timely Christmas gift, following its approval of the Commonwealth's request for the distribution of emergency food stamps on the island. The Nutrition Assistance Program of the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs yesterday started processing the applications of Rota residents for emergency food stamps, as the island reels from the assault of Supertyphoon Pongsona. "We mobilized people already," DCCA Secretary Juan L. Babauta said, adding that two representatives from the local NAP office were on Rota yesterday to start receiving applications.

December 25,2003

'Cash flow woes expected'

The current cash flow problem besetting the Babauta administration is not really surprising because it pretty much conforms with the House of Representatives' projections for this fiscal year, particularly the first quarter, according to House Speaker Heinz S. Hofschneider. At the same time, he pointed out that, although there is heightened economic activity in the first quarter due to the holiday retail sales, this will not be reflected in the books until February and March-the last two months of the second quarter. "I think that I've been quite consistent-and right-in our projections for this year. And traditionally, the first quarter is always problematic in terms of cash flow because of the holidays. Revenue is always expected to dip during the first quarter going toward the holidays. By the second and third quarter, you will begin to see the effect of consumer behavior in the first quarter. The collection would be due in the second and third quarter, so it is expected that the first quarter is always low," he told reporters yesterday.

CUC board approves retro pay

The majority members of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board voted to give ahead of the Department of Finance the retroactive pay amounting to some $410,000 due the CUC personnel for year 1993. The decision now requires the board to touch its already committed payment check to the Office of the Public Auditor and the Department of Finance. The retro pay would be sourced from the CUC's second payment check worth $588,000, which is intended to settle its outstanding accounts with OPA. CUC owes the OPA some $4 million in unpaid contribution spanning six years.

December 25,2004

Administration wants lump sum funding for PSS

The Executive Branch is planning to use Compact money as leverage for a $20-million lump sum loan from the NMI Retirement Fund to finance the Public School System's capital improvement projects. This came following the governor's announcement that he would commit the entire Compact Impact funds totaling $5.1 million a year in the next four years to PSS. The administration favors giving the whole $20 million to PSS instead of giving the amount in $5.1 million increments, citing that the former would result in greater efficiency.

'Deteriorating classrooms pose a hazard to students'

A Board of Education official said that the current state of disrepair and deterioration of classrooms on Saipan pose a hazard to students. BOE secretary-treasurer Marja Lee Taitano said the use of Public School System facilities as evacuation centers during natural disasters have also wrought havoc on the school calendar. In a board meeting held Monday, Taitano narrated to the board her recent inspection of school facilities around the island.

Group to Bush: Don't scale down marine monument

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Friends of the Monument, the group that is supporting President Bush's plan to create a national marine monument in the CNMI's northernmost islands, is urging the president not to scale down the project.

In a recent letter to the Council for Environmental Quality, Ignacio Cabrera, chairman of the Friends of the Monument, reiterated that what the people of the CNMI want is what they have accepted and endorsed—a monument as it was originally proposed.

Reports earlier indicated that President Bush may scale down the area.

Cabrera's group told CEQ chair James Connaugthon that people in the Commonwealth want a very large no-take reserve that will put the CNMI on the international map. The group said they do not want weakened protections and that the area designated must not be reduced.

The group urged Bush to use the Antiquities Act of 1906 to designate the largest no-take monument, which would include the full exclusive economic zone surrounding the islands of Uracas, Maug and Asuncion, encompassing the water column, the sea life and the geological features at the bottom.

Except for traditional subsistence fishing, the group is also proposing that both commercial and recreational fishing be prohibited in the area, along with other extractive uses such as deep-sea mining.

"We believe the best use of the treasures in this region is as a protected zone for future use in research, tourism and education, not extraction," Cabrera said.

"Given the distance from Saipan and the small number of people who travel to these islands, we believe this limited exception to the no-extraction regulations would best be managed by the local indigenous people to ensure both that our rights are protected and this privilege is not abused," the group told Connaughton.

The group believes that the no-extraction area should extend to the entire EEZ so that it includes the full convergence zone of the Pacific Plate and Philippine Plate, including the seamounts, hydrothermal vents, mud volcanoes, submerged volcanoes, coral reefs, the famed Mariana Trench and all other sea life and habitat in-between.

The group said that these habitats, from the surface down to the deepest darkest place on Earth, are all intertwined.

"Many bottom-dwelling creatures depend on the detritus "snow" from dead animals from above, while pelagic fish feed on smaller creatures sustained by deep sea nutrient upwelling. You cannot separate the bottom of the ocean from the water above it. They are all connected as one ecosystem," the group said.

The group is also asking that modest additions along the Mariana Trench be made to increase the area into the largest no-take marine monument in the world.

Connaughton visited the CNMI over a month ago to meet with various sectors of the community to discuss and gather information regarding the issue.

Cabrera extended his group's appreciation to the Bush administration for taking seriously the support of the local Northern Marianas people in its upcoming decision on the proposed national monument.

The issue, Cabrera told Connaughton, has engaged the CNMI community for more than a year, debated several times in public, discussed, analyzed and argued over.

"Both sides have been on TV and the radio many times and more than 150 letters have been published in the local papers, most of them in favor by the way," Cabrera noted.

Cabrera said his group had conducted over 115 public meetings with over 3,300 people attending. "We have also held uncounted individual discussions. You witnessed firsthand the widespread community interest and support at the CEQ-sponsored meeting," noted Cabrera.

He said that the 400 residents in attendance made it one of the largest public meetings in CNMI history.

The group gathered 6,000 signatures from local residents in support of such project.

"That's an unheard of number and dwarfs the 2,300 votes of the top vote getter in the recent election for our first congressional delegate," Cabrera told Connaughton.

He also noted that some 206 business owners and managers have signified their support.

"The tourism industry and business community know what we believe to be true, that the monument will be an environmental crown jewel for the CNMI and the U.S., and will also boost our visitor industry and offer a significant contribution to the economy of the CNMI," Cabrera said.

A recent poll, Cabrera noted, showed that residents support the monument by an overwhelming 2:1 ratio.

Public warned of high waves

The Emergency Management Office issued a high-surf advisory yesterday, saying that CNMI waters will be unsafe due to large waves that will persist until Friday evening.

A high-surf advisory means that high surf will affect exposed reefs and beaches in the area, producing dangerous rip currents. The public is urged to avoid venturing near reefs and exposed beaches as wind and wave conditions support dangerous rip currents. Rip currents are life threatening to anyone entering the water.

A small-craft advisory for hazardous seas will also remains in effect until 6pm Friday. Boaters should exercise caution when entering harbors.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam, EMO said that east swells produced by fresh trade winds will produce hazardous surf on east and north facing reefs until Friday evening.

Expect hazardous surf of up to 9 feet on north facing reef and up to 12 feet on east facing reefs. This surf will remain hazardous through Friday evening.

Avoid venturing near exposed reefs and beaches, especially those along north and east facing reefs.

On Rota, north-facing beaches include Teteto Beach. On Saipan, north-facing beaches include Achugao Beach and east-facing beaches include Tank Beach. On Tinian, east-facing beaches include Long Beach. ***(EMO)***

Tourism industry sets Sat. cleanup

Tourism industry leaders of the Northern Mariana Islands are inviting the community to join them in giving time this weekend to keep the islands beautiful for both residents and visitors, alike.

Members of Japan Saipan Travel Association, Marianas Visitors Authority, and the Korea Travel Association of Saipan will hold their annual Travel Industry Cleanup on Saturday, Dec. 27, in Garapan.

"Saipan, Tinian and Rota are all beautiful islands that we can be proud of," said MVA managing director Perry Tenorio. "Keeping our islands clean shows we take pride in where we live. It also makes a positive impression on visitors about who we are and how we take care of our islands."

The cleanup will start at 6:30am at the American Memorial Park parking lot, proceed through the Garapan hotel district and continue south to the Garapan basketball court. The cleanup will then return north along the beaches of Hafadai Beach Hotel, Makaka Beach, Fiesta Resort & Spa and Hyatt Regency Saipan before finishing at Micro Beach.

Companies, community groups, or individuals interested in joining the Tourism Industry Cleanup may contact Ed Diaz of MVA for more information at ediaz@mymarianas.com or 670-664-3200. ***(MVA)***



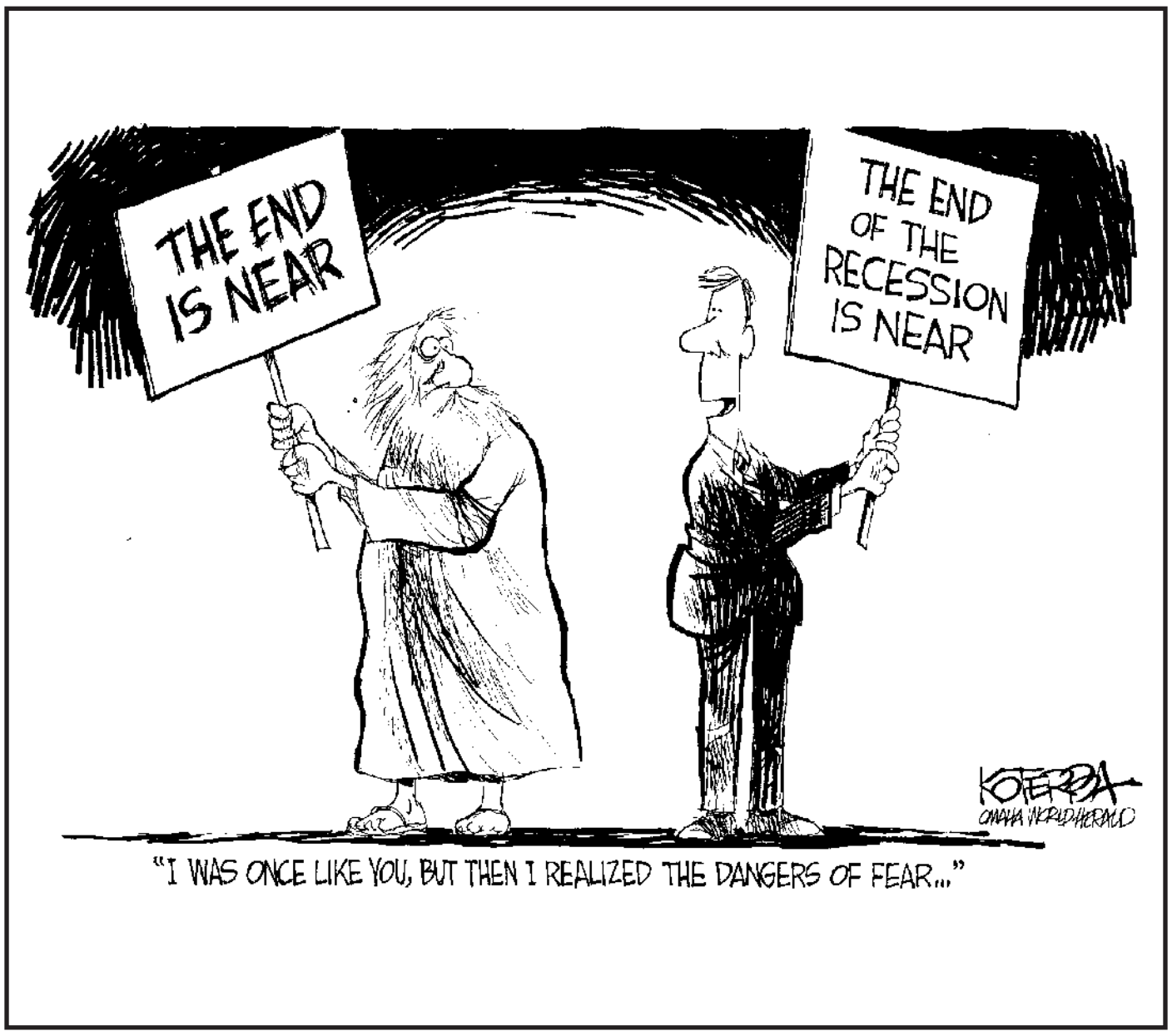
Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

W. Mark Felt

"Old men forget," says the Shakespearean warrior-king on the day of battle, yet there are those who will "remember with advantages" what feats they did in times of strife, when great issues were decided. W. Mark Felt Sr., who died Thursday at the age of 95, never really availed himself of that old man's privilege. He played a key role in bringing down an administration that badly abused its powers, but he did it in secret, and he kept that secret almost to the grave. By the time he revealed his identity—just 3 1/2 years ago—the anonymous source known as "Deep Throat" had been struck down by common calamities of age—stroke and dementia. So much for remembering with advantage.

But, then, Felt was never all that certain whether he would be regarded as a hero or a turncoat. As a high FBI official with intimate knowledge of what was going on in the Nixon administration during its frantic efforts to cover up Watergate and other misdeeds, he helped Bob Woodward of The Post immeasurably. He served as a valuable anonymous source while the team of Woodward and Carl Bernstein worked the biggest scandal story in ages. Felt could tell himself—and certainly many would have told him—that he was doing the country an invaluable service, that he had no choice but to reveal the secret information entrusted to him.

But Mark Felt was also a creature of the FBI—J. Edgar Hoover's FBI—and he knew that what he was doing would be seen by many of his colleagues as a betrayal. Given what we know, and continue to learn, about Hoover's abuses of power, the loyalty that Felt displayed to him and to his legacy only adds to the ambiguity of his career. In fact, it led to his conviction on charges of authorizing illegal break-ins at the premises of antiwar radicals and their families—for which Felt received a pardon from Ronald Reagan.

Mark Felt inhabited a world in which good and talented and diligent people such as himself could feel it was a justifiable act to spy on someone of the stature of Martin Luther King Jr. It is a world in which many things, good and bad, come under the broad rubric of "security." Few who operate in it emerge as pristine heroes, as we continue to be reminded. But Shakespeare notwithstanding, there's not much likelihood by this time that the good Mark Felt did will be interred with his bones.

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The Four Ps of Persistence

"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education alone will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent." – Calvin Coolidge

By RIK and JANEL VILLEGAS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Rik is a business instructor at NMC and Janel is a partner with BizResults, LLC (www.bizresults.org). They can be contacted at biz_results@yahoo.com.



On one of our, trips we traveled through Arches National Monument in southern Utah and viewed spectacular rock formations. Some of the large arches are red rocks that have a whole chiseled through the center by wind and rain that have beat against them for eons of time. They stand as a testament to the power of unending persistence of the elements. Lecretius once said: "The drops of rain make a hole in the stone; not by violence, but by oft falling."

As we approach the end of another year, thoughts are often turned to what has been accomplished. How many of this year's resolutions were fulfilled? What things could've and should've been done if you would've exercised a little more stick-to-itiveness?

The common denominator of all successful people is their ability to persist. Single-minded persistence focused on a worthy goal will trump talent, education, and genius. Disraeli defined genius as the power to make continuous effort. Napoleon Hill listed persistence as one of the key steps necessary for a prosperous life in his book, *Think and Grow Rich*. Willpower when combined with desire creates an unstoppable force that will drive you to accomplish anything you can imagine.

Hill believed that if individuals incorporated four simple steps into the fabric of their character, that it would lead to the habit of persistence. These steps will allow you to take control of your economic destiny, lead to freedom and independence of thought, guarantee favorable "breaks", convert dreams into physical reality, and help gain control over fear, discouragement, and indifference. Now that's a pretty powerful list of promises, and to sweeten the pot even more he believed the steps would also lead the way to power, fame, and worldly recognition. In fact, they are essential for success in all walks of life.

Are you ready to learn more about the four steps? They can be remembered by thinking of the four Ps of Persistence: Purpose, Plan, Positive, and Pact.

Step One: Purpose. *"The secret of success is constancy of purpose."* – Elbert Hubbard

You must have a definite purpose that is backed by a burning desire for its fulfillment. The stronger your desire, the more driven you will be to see your purpose achieved.

Step Two: Plan. *"That which we persist in doing becomes easier. Not that the nature of the thing has changed, but that our power to do has increased."* – Ralph Waldo Emerson

Planning crystallizes your purpose into action. A definite plan that is expressed in continuous action will keep you focused on your purpose. As you consistently move toward your purpose, it becomes easier to stay the course to completion.

Step Three: Positive. *"Your ability to persist in the face of adversity, setbacks and disappointments is your measure of your belief in yourself."* – Brian Tracy

Any worthwhile purpose will have its share of challenges to overcome; however, if you focus on the negative setbacks, you will lose site of the positive outcome. You can never be defeated until you accept defeat as a reality. Keep a positive mindset and don't let discouragement overcome you. If you don't give up, nothing will ever keep you down.

Step Four: Pact. *"Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up."* – Thomas Edison

The mastermind principle was a common factor that Napoleon Hill discovered among the most successful people of his day. A friendly alliance of people that come together to support and encourage each other to follow-through with both their plan and purpose is the last step to remain consistent. Make sure that each person has a purpose and plan, stays positive, and is genuinely interested in the welfare of each member of the group.

If persistence was not one of your strengths this year, then recommit yourself to become consistent by following the four Ps and seeing your goals through to fruition. Like the persistence of the gentle wind that can carve its way through solid rock over time, your consistent effort will allow you to achieve all your dreams and desires. *"Energy and persistence conquer all things."* – Benjamin Franklin

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Call me average



By WILLIAM H. "BILL" STEWART
An Average Economist

William H. Stewart is an economist, historian, and military cartographer.

I was watching a CNN interview where a particular controversial question was posed to a government official: "What to you think the average person's opinion is about your demonstrated incompetence?"

Needless to say the official was shocked at the directness of such an impertinent question and replied, "I don't know, you should ask the average person."

Since I have previously thought of myself as non-average based upon what my mother said, I decided to think about that person who is considered average.

I really don't know anyone by the name of "average." As an economist I have had many occasions to deal with mathematical averages. One example is that of an average family size of 4.2 people per household. I have never seen two tenths of a person in a household—or anywhere else for that matter.

Still another type of average is a "median" value. For example, the median household income in the CNMI 10 years ago was $22,898. Median is a middle value meaning that there are as many values below that figure as there are above that single middle value.

A third type of average is the "mean" value. The mean household income in the Commonwealth 10 years ago was $37,015. "Better to be mean than median," my friend Poteet Prickins might say.

Seriously, mean is the middle value between two extremes. An example might be "If you stand on a pan of ice water with your head in a hot oven, on the average ("mean," I mean) you feel fine." Take your pick as to which suits your fancy—average, median or mean or meanest.

To avoid all the confusion and to cast modesty aside, I am going to self appoint myself as the average person; or perhaps as a median American; or how about the mean married man (who has learned he has two choices—a man can be right or happy—but not both. On average it doesn't take long to learn that). I shall be whatever average classification is needed by society. I shall do this without pay.

Therefore, by appointing myself as "average" I can speak on any subject of concern to all of "us" average people. This is better than bitching; it lends more credibility to any issue of interest to the average person and doesn't carry the connotation of frustration. It has a factual ring about it and is more respectable. For example, "The average retiree in the CNMI is quite pissed at some members in the Legislature and the central government for their total disregard for the deteriorating condition of all the retirees' future financial security."

Many people ask economists to review statistics such as the above and advise them as to what the future may bring—at least in terms of the economy. One of the things I have learned is that economic forecasting is very difficult especially if it's about the future. For this reason, he who attempts to earn a living by a crystal ball should also be prepared to eat ground glass.

When it is necessary to examine various economic data within a series of statistical tables and one searches for a decision as to which data to evaluate first, the decision is often like trying to determine which side of a slice of bread to butter; on average it won't matter.

A story is told about an average man whose bread fell from the table and landed buttered side up. He ran straight away to an average economist and reported this deviance from one of the basic laws of the universe, which holds that the bread should have fallen buttered side down on an expensive carpet. After much discussion he finally convinced the economist that it had actually happened. After hours of pondering this strange event the economist reasoned that the bread must have been buttered on the wrong side.

Editor's comment: The author has been employed as the director of the 1973 census for all of the Trust Territory, co-director of the CNMI's 1990 census and participated in the Commonwealth's 1995 mid-decade census. He has been unsuccessful in finding employment as a humorist.

Letters to the Editor

Tropical Marianas at Christmas. Joy, joy, joy.

The SVES monthly assembly focused on the *Tropical Marianas at Christmas*, highlighting the musical and dance traditions as well as current practices of most of the prominent ethnic groups who have resided in the Marianas.

By the day's title, tropical Marianas was what was on display; Christmas was simply the time of year, though in previous years Christmas practices and traditions were intentionally put on stage. Some may think that there is a splitting of hair in this minor shift, and they would be right.

Some religious groups have taken exception to participating in the December assembly on religious grounds, and last year the program was a specifically stated as a cultural celebration. The events, however, were still on Christmas as a religious dramaturgy. In Tuesday's assembly, the focus shifted and it may take another year before members of religious groups who oppose religious Christmas in their public schools may eventually decide to allow their children to participate in the school program, but at least the option will already be there.

Community Church of Saipan choir's rendition of the Craig-Clarr and Clydesdale's contemporary musical *Joy, Joy, Joy* to diners at Aqua Resort Club Friday evening was spectacular, at least to those who shared in mainstream Christian metaphors prior to WWII, the metaphor of Empire, of sovereign Lord and the Liege Savior.

It was not until the ascendancy of the Christian Church within the Roman Empire, first with Constantine and later with Theodotius, that the Christian community started celebrating Christmas as the birth of Jesus. In the eastern tradition, the birthday was either in January or in April, but the Romans needed to counter Bacchanalian debauchery in the introduction of new wine, so a shift to bread and wine as the Eucharistic elements central to liturgy, as well as the promise of newness in the end of the longest night at winter solstice.

No self-respecting historian, Christian or otherwise, would ever seriously claim Dec. 25 as the birthday of Jesus of Nazareth. The evolution of Christian piety and the need particularly of the feudal structures of Medieval Europe to highlight the sovereign authority of either emperor/king or pope/bishop resulted in the idolatry of Jesus, thus in some circles, we might as well rename Christmas to Jesusmas. In Christian theology, Christ is the role, the messianic role that Jesus' disciple ascribed to his life's meaning, thus the religion was called Christianity and not Jesusism! And lest we forgot, Jesus was not a Christian; he was a Jew!

Conversant as I am as a Methodist cleric with the Christian metaphors of a bygone age, I am thus concerned that after the theological revolutions accompanying the two World Wars with the rediscovery of G_d, that is YHWH in the Semitic sense, is but a devotional term to radically living one's life before Reality *sans* illusions of the mind, delusions of the heart and the external mirages that many cultural inventions are heir to.

Zoroaster coined the eternal battle between good and evil, and of course, when President Reagan dubbed more than half of the world as belonging to the Evil Empire, American reality was defined as history's "good guys," and it did not take us long to justify every conceivable atrocities that we would not normally countenance from the other guys were it not that we were literally ushering the Armageddon and saving the world in our war against terror. The Egyptian pharaohs gave us heaven, and the decline of the Roman empire gave us purgatory and hell.

Serious, committed and educated Lutheran chaplains, Roman priests and Spanish clergy pronounced the invocations and benedictions to the gatherings of forces of the Third Reich, Mussolini's and Franco's fascism.

Christian piety in converting the Jesus of history into the idolatrous worship of a cosmic savior (evolution for the curious in holy writ goes from Paul's good guy, to Mark's divine son, to Matthew and Luke's royal King, to John's cosmic *Logos*) with insistence on one's literal interpretation of scriptural metaphors has led to centuries of Christian-initiated wars in defense of the faith and the promotion of holy Christian Empire!

So I get concerned when devotees continue to insist on their limited observation of Christmas to the idolatry of Jesus. The *Joy, Joy, Joy* theme of the musical rendition last Friday was sufficient for me to appreciate the 6th grade boy at SVES who rendered the best Santa with the sexiest moves this side of the Arctic. And when 5th grader girls threw their jackets off to bump-and-grind it to today's music, there was an affirmation of the physiology of our existence that is missing in today's education.

If Christmas is about birthing, then let it be about the infants cry of new air in the lungs and the instinctive protest against being pulled out of the room service and regulated temperature in the womb, the cutting of umbilical cord that is a prerequisite to liberation into glorious freedom.

Let Christmas be a celebration of the way life is, in the here and now, and the glorious struggle with all the contradictions we have created in only five millennia of human civilization. Then, Christmas becomes a "Yes" to life, and in my Christian understanding, that is what it is all about.

Jaime Vergara
via e-mail

Find a weapon and fight!

Believe it or not, much of how we are perceived in Washington is centered on the title of this letter—a people led by a government who looks for a weapon to fight the federal government. The discovery of potential Compact funds to help restructure our economy is very interesting and seems to have the potential of being the real McCoy at a time when we need it most. My mother used to tell me that people are always looking for a gold mine, only to discover they were standing on it. Well, it seems we have been doing just that if the legalities over the Compact funds discovery hold true. But my concern is the political approach to certifying the discovery and claiming a right to the funds, which is fighting. True and great politicians have all mastered the art of diplomacy but it seems to be very hard to get that point across to our chief executive. The better diplomats we become, the better our chances of influencing legislation and being successful in Washington D.C.

The idea of filing another lawsuit in the present political atmosphere is absolutely ludicrous because it still presents the same attitude of fighting the federal government and we don't even have the means to fight. The job of our government is to hold the federal government accountable for their actions through collaboration and not to fight over the implementation of federal laws. Our Commonwealth government by design is and has always been in a position to have diplomacy work to our advantage through the United Nations. The unique status that our politicians have provoked was first recognized by the United Nations, not the United States, and I submit that the UN is still the best governing entity to fight for our Constitutional rights. The feds will have to listen to the UN because our Delegate can only create background noise, which is easily muffled in Washington. Taking our case for the Compact funds to UN will put us on front street with the feds. However, we must also own up to our mistakes, since the basis of the federal government's arguments will be "it's our own fault" and to a large degree the feds will be right! If we want to fight for the Compact funds, take our concerns to the UN as we don't have a vote in Congress nor a Senate seat. Don't try to fight the feds alone on their own turf and especially when we haven't capitulated for our own mistakes. The power plays we are trying to make are examples of horrible politics.

Our new delegate is now going off to Washington without a unified stance on federalization, just as I predicted. The feds just requested the court to dismiss the governor's lawsuit because it is clearly not representative of the people's desire and it is also speculative and hypothetical, which is the same reasons I stated when the lawsuit was first brought up—I said we can't file a lawsuit for something that hasn't taken place and now my argument is also supported by the federal government! We are experiencing the backlash of our own failure now and not the feds' implementation of federalization. Now another idea for a lawsuit has surfaced. We keep sending the signal to Washington that we are looking for a weapon to fight the feds with and the pattern of our fighting is clearly documented dating back to the Froilan administration. I can also guarantee this administration will not appoint the necessary and proper people for the economic summit, which I originally proposed. Our leaders should take note of our new president's decisions to appoint people based more on merit than politics. If the economic summit is composed of the same old people and mentality that contributed to create this economic mess, then we know that the outcome will be the same old s*&#.

When will our leaders become real politicians with diplomatic skills and use the tools of principles and values for which there is no defense. Given the name calling and some of the outrageous statements coming from the Executive Branch about the feds and some of those in the Legislature, I don't think many of our leaders re-

See FIND on Page 13

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°

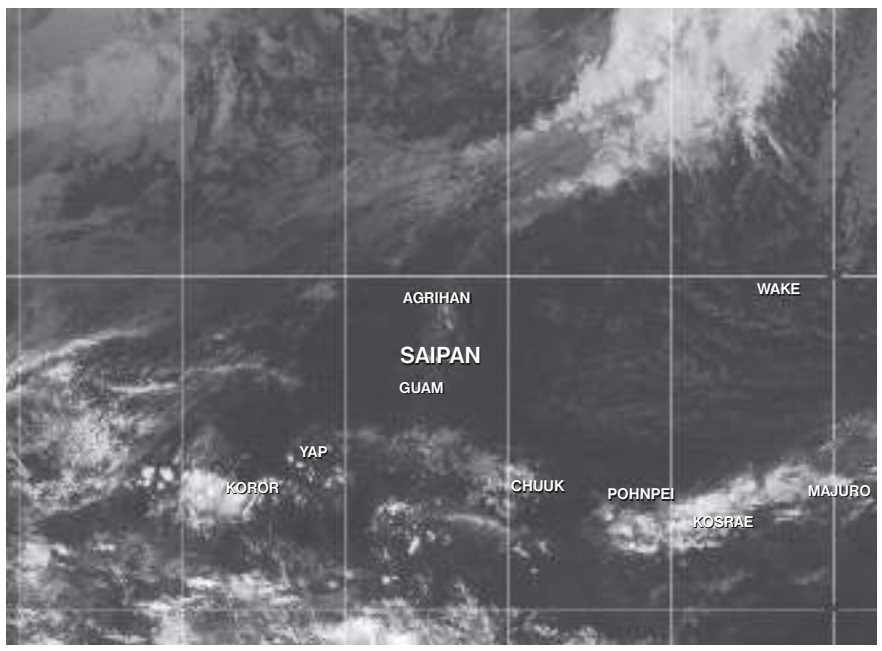
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Showers	▲84	▼76
Palau	Showers	▲86	▼77
Yap	Rain	▲86	▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲89	▼79
Pohnpei	Showers	▲85	▼76
Kosrae	Rain	▲86	▼78
Majuro	Showers	▲83	▼76

Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲71	▼57
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	▲34	▼12
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	▲72	▼63
Honolulu	Showers	▲77	▼71
London	Showers	▲48	▼36
Los Angeles	Showers	▲58	▼46
Manila	Cloudy	▲86	▼75
Melbourne	Sunny	▲79	▼60
Miami	Mostly Sunny	▲82	▼69
New York	Mostly Cloudy	▲46	▼33
Osaka	Showers	▲48	▼31
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	▲39	▼32
Pusan	Cloudy	▲40	▼21
Rome	Rain	▲49	▼36
Salem	Rain	▲39	▼33
San Francisco	Showers	▲53	▼41
Seoul	Sunny	▲23	▼ 6
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	▲53	▼33
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	▲51	▼30

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, DEC. 24, 2008
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line extends southwestward from 25N150E to beyond 130E at 16N. Patchy cloudiness and scattered rain are found northwest of the shear line. A stronger shear line extends southwestward into the deep tropics from 14N180 to 5N157E. Extensive cloudiness and scattered showers are found within 150 miles northwest of the shear line. Trade wind convergence associated with this shear line is producing scattered showers across the Marshall Islands westward to Pohnpei and Kosrae. Wind convergence east of a surface trough located between Mindanao and 130E is generating scattered showers west of Palau within 60 miles of a line from 6N135E to 8N130E. A weak tropical wave is enhancing shower activity in the Northern Marianas from 14N to 20N between 145E and 146E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
7:08AM Today	High Tide:	1.7 Feet
11:44AM Today	Low Tide:	1.4 Feet
4:33PM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
11:43PM Today	Low Tide:	0.1 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:40AM	5:54 PM
Friday	6:41AM	5:55 PM
Saturday	6:41AM	5:55 PM
Sunday	6:42AM	5:56 PM
Monday	6:42AM	5:56 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	4:35AM	3:57 PM
Friday	5:27AM	4:46 PM
Saturday	6:18AM	5:38 PM
Sunday	7:07AM	6:30 PM
Monday	7:52AM	7:22 PM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

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- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 20, 2008

DEPARTURES			
Saipan-Rota			
CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm	1,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm	1,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	2,3,4,5,6
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 099	5:00am	7:40am	Daily
NW 078	8:25am	1:30pm	Daily
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
OZ 119	4:00am	6:40am	1,4,6
NW 083	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:25am	11:05am	Daily
Saipan-Incheon			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:20pm	7:00pm	Daily
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	3:50am	7:20am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Shanghai			
FM 844	2:50am	5:40am	2,6
Rota-Guam			
CO 9597	12:50pm	1:20pm	1,7
Guam-Manila			
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	3,5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:50am	1,2,4,6,7

ARRIVALS			
Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	3:25am	4:00am	5,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,2,3,4,7
CO9598	2:30am	4:00am	5,6 via Rota
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9600	10:20am	11:10am	Daily
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:15am	2:40pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:25am+1	Daily
NW 100	8:45pm	1:15am+1	Daily
Osaka-Saipan			
OZ 120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7
NW 084	10:40am	3:10pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	9:00pm	1:25am+1	Daily
Incheon-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:30pm	2:40am+1	3,4,6,7
Shanghai-Saipan			
FM 843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	2:30am	3:00am	5,6
Manila-Guam			
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	3,5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:10pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Letters to the Editor

Acknowledging the years of support

As 2008 comes to a close, the Friends of the Mariana Islands has completed this year's Environmental Restoration Cleanup Project funded by Mobil Oil Mariana Islands Inc. along Tun Herman Pan Road up to ISA Drive (from Airport Road up to Botanical Garden, Papago).

The Mobil Oil Mariana Islands Inc. donation was used by the Friends of the Mariana Islands for the supplies needed by the FMI volunteers. The volunteers sincerely appreciate the support of Mobil Oil Mariana Islands Inc. in this undertaking. Without the support from Mobil Oil Mariana Islands Inc., the Environmental Restoration Cleanup Project would not have been possible. The Friends of the Mariana Islands hopes for continued support from Mobil Oil Marian islands Inc. in 2009 for an Environmental Restoration Cleanup Project along Lau-Lau Bay Drive.

The Friends of the Mariana Islands would like to acknowledge the years of support from Mrs. Cecile Bamba-Suda, manager, Public Relations & Government Affairs of Mobil Oil Mariana Islands Inc., and wish her well in her retirement plan. Mrs. Suda will be missed by the Friends of the Mariana Islands and each member.

Marites Aquino Castillo
FMI president/chairwoman
San Vicente Village, Saipan.

Taotano Tano's primary mission

Our homeland was given a nationwide reputation as that of a Third World country, simply because our government both past and present ignorantly chose a path of self-enrichment, which led to numerous shelving of local laws intended to benefit our people.

Although we welcome the federal government taking control of our local Immigration system, it does not end there for we must hold those responsible who were a part of a self-interest network or organization involved in human smuggling, human exploitation, labor abuses, unpaid wages, illegal processing, and numerous other illegal activities. Such grave insults and disrespect to our own people will not continue for we swore that we will hold these public officials responsible and accountable.

People may disagree with our unorthodox method of research and investigation but at the end of the day the same people will understand, agree and appreciate our intended goals and achievements.

We must instill responsibility, accountability, transparency and above all integrity in our homeland so that one day our people that have given up, remained unemployed and have gone abroad may return to the islands we call home, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Taotao Tano stands proud on the many issues we have sought in order to bring justice to our people, our community and our homeland as whole.

Gregorio Cruz Jr.
President, Taotao Tano CNMI Inc.

FIND

From Page 11

ally understand the importance and magnitude of remaining professional and using the tools of diplomacy given to us by our founders to govern over our democracy. Our representation in Congress has always been an insult to the core democratic values and the principle of republicanism. But we used the lack of equal representation for an excuse to fight against the feds and have never approached the challenge of changing our status from an intellectual approach. We never really fought for representation in Congress and used it for an excuse to create more enmity by giving the impression of using representation for a weapon (reason) to fight with, instead of addressing the true source of the problem.

We only have representation in Congress now because of a brokered deal over federalization, which I see as nothing more than "tokenism" without a vote. The only legitimate fight we have is the right to vote in Congress and for the President but we created an oxymoron of our own politics for equal rights and representation when we cry unfair equal representation and voting rights, yet hide behind a flag of uniqueness and Covenant specialties. It is clear our relationship with the feds is not getting better but worse and we must take the first steps to change these conditions as a united people and a united government.

Ambrose M. Bennett
Kagman, Saipan

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2X4X14 - $5.00
2X4X16 - $5.58
2X4X18 - $6.30
2X4X20 - $6.85
2X6X12 - $6.90
2X6X14 - $7.90
2X6X16 - $8.90
2X6X18 - $9.90
2X6X20 - $10.90
UTILITY LUMBER TREATED
2X4X12 - $6.70
2X4X14 - $7.70
2X4X16 - $8.70
2X4X18 - $9.70
2X4X20 - $10.70
2X6X12 - $10.20
2X6X14 - $12.20
2X6X16 - $14.20
2X6X18 - $15.20
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License: ABY-153
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PRICE $14,599
REDUCED PRICE
$12,599


USED CARS

STOCK	YEAR	MODEL	TRANS.	MILEAGE	COLOR	LICENSE #	PRICE	REDUCED PRICE
TOYOTA SEDANS								
R08-015F	2005	ECHO 4DR	AUTO	59734	WHITE	ADJ-831	9,299	
R08-022B	2005	ECHO 4DR	AUTO	70447	AQUA	ADH-691	7,999	
R08-019F	2005	COROLLA 4DR	AUTO	41092	WHITE	ACD-346	10,799	
R08-023F	2007	COROLLA 4DR	AUTO	29549	RED	ACE-780	14,999	
R08-011F	2007	YARIS 4DR	AUTO	65940	SILVER	ACC-154	11,399	
R08-008F	2006	CAMRY LE 4DR	AUTO	18576	BEIGE	ADN-161	15,999	
R08-020F	2006	CAMRY LE 4DR	AUTO	50052	RED	ADO-831	15,999	
U08-043P	2000	CELICA 2DR	MANUAL	72097	BLUE	ABZ-838	7,999	
R08-021F	2005	MATRIX BASE	AUTO	68931	RED	ACD-510	9,999	
GM CARS								
R08-014F	2006	AVEO 4DR.	AUTO	33945	WHITE	ADS-642	9,999	
R07-013F	2005	AVEO HATCHBACK	AUTO	39164	ORANGE	ADO-022	~~9,599~~	6,899
R07-034F	2005	OPTRA 4DR.	AUTO	14592	SILVER	ACD-020	~~10,999~~	9,499
LEXUS								
U08-067P	1995	LEXUS LS400	AUTO	24762	WHITE	ABS-062	11,399	
R08-003F	2003	LEXUS LS430	AUTO	54477	IVORY	ADU-502	~~29,999~~	26,899
TOYOTA TRUCKS								
R07-038F	2004	TACOMA 4X2 XTRACAB	AUTO	49609	BEIGE	ABV-159	~~11,699~~	10,599
OTHER CARS & TRUCKS								
U07-106P	2004	HONDA CIVIC DX 4DR	AUTO	53147	SILVER	ADF-401	~~8,999~~	7,999
U07-107P	2004	HONDA CIVIC DX 4DR	AUTO	48755	SILVER	ADF-421	~~8,999~~	7,999
U07-034T	2000	NISSAN MAXIMA GXE 4DR.	AUTO	68648	WHITE	ACT-812	~~10,999~~	8,399
U07-104T	2003	NISSAN MURANO SE	AUTO	32000	PEWT	ABZ-615	~~16,799~~	15,299
U08-038T	2001	MITS MONTERO WGN	AUTO	93155	BEIGE	CVS-88	7,999	
U07-095T	1999	MAZDA MILLENIA 4DR.SEDAN	AUTO	91014	BEIGE	ABP-583	~~7,999~~	4,899
GM VAN								
R08-017F	2003	EXPRESS VAN	AUTO	117560	WHITE	BUS-1077	9,499	
SPORT UTILITY								
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BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

Happy birthday and merry Christmas greetings go out to Arron, who is celebrating his 9th birthday today, Dec. 25. "May the good Lord shower you with blessings on this wonderful day and may you enjoy many more special days to come." With love, from your Mom, Dad, and your family.

DeLeon Guerrero to attend Obama inauguration

Matthew Owen DeLeon Guerrero, 19, has been selected for a unique educational opportunity to take part in the historic inauguration of the 44th President of the United States in Washington D.C. on Jan. 20, 2009.



Guerrero

DeLeon Guerrero, who is a sophomore at Boise State University in Idaho, has been selected to participate in the University Presidential Inaugural Conference as an Inaugural Scholar. DeLeon Guerrero was chosen due to his alumnus status with the National Youth Leadership Forum and the International Scholar Laureate Program.

According to the conference organizers, he has additionally met the academic requirements and demonstrated the leadership qualities necessary to make a positive contribution to the quality and integrity of this historic inaugural conference. At the conference he will join five days of special events and activities commemorating the inauguration of the President and Vice President.

A preliminary schedule of events shows that DeLeon Guerrero will participate in a pre-inaugural conference where the keynote speakers are former U.S. Secretary of State Gen. Colin L. Powell, and former vice president and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Al Gore. DeLeon Guerrero will also have the opportunity to meet White House officials, congressional staff, presidential historians, and political experts and commentators. Later, DeLeon Guerrero is scheduled to explore historic sites in and around the nation's capitol and participate in activities and group events. At the Conference, he will join other outstanding scholars from around the world.

On the day of the inauguration, DeLeon Guerrero will be a special guest on the National Mall the morning of Jan. 20, 2009, as Barack Obama is sworn into office as the 44th President of the United State of America. Concluding the Inauguration Day activities, he will attend a black-tie Inaugural Ball.

Matthew is the youngest son of Edward C. and Eve O. DeLeon-Guerrero of Koblerville, Saipan, CNMI. He has just returned from an International Scholar Laureate Program Delegation on Medicine in China from May 27 to June 11, 2008. Matthew's older brother, Michael, and older sister, Mary Louise, also attend Boise State University in Boise, Idaho. Matthew graduated with honors from Mount Carmel High School 2006-07. He was Speaker of the CNMI Youth Congress in 2006-07 and received the Governor's Award in 2007. ***(PR)***

NMC offers computer literacy courses

The Northern Marianas College, through the Division of Community Programs and Services' Community Development Institute, is offering short-term classes to interested individuals who wish to improve their computer application skills.

The courses are offered as part of the college's mission to provide customized, continuing educational and professional development opportunities in response to community needs.

Additionally, the classes, which are designed to improve individual knowledge and specific skills, are geared around actual workforce needs and experiences based on course surveys, community needs assessments, and interviews with employers. The schedule and course fees are listed below. For a more detailed description of each course, contact CDI at 234-5498 ext. 1005 or log on to www.nmcnet.edu.

How to Properly Use a Keyboard (Keyboarding)
January 12-16, 2009 (5-7pm)
Fee: $60

Understanding Personal Computers (PCs) and How They Work
January 20-21, 2009 (5-8pm)
Fee: $35

E-mail: The Best Way to Communicate
January 22-23, 2009 (5-7pm)
Fee: $25

How to Use Word Processing Applications
January 26-30, 2009 (5-8pm)
Fee: $90

Creating Digital Presentations
February 2-6, 2009 (5-8pm)
Fee: $90

How to Use Spreadsheet Applications
February 9-13, 2009 (5-8pm)
Fee: $90

CDI will also be offering its Customer Service and Administrative Training Courses in February into March. For a schedule of these classes, log on to www.nmcnet.edu.

All interested individuals should register at least seven days before the first day of class. Certificates of attendance and competence will be awarded to registered students who complete all course requirements. Full payment is required for admission to a class. To register or for information about these classes, visit the CDI Office in Building P on the NMC Campus in As Terlaje or call 234-5498 extension 1000 or e-mail logumoro@nmcnet.edu. ***(NMC)***

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- 3 cups of low fat or skim milk, yogurt or other low fat milk products a day
- 5 ½ oz. of lean meat, fish or beans a day

Remember, you CAN prevent diabetes.

To learn more, please contact the Division of Public Health Diabetes Prevention & Control Program at 664-4030/1

Business

Investor who lost big to Madoff kills himself

NEW YORK (AP)—A fund manager who lost more than $1 billion of his clients' money to Bernard Madoff was discovered dead Tuesday after committing suicide at his Manhattan office, marking a grim turn in a scandal that has left investors around the world in financial ruin.

Rene-Thierry Magon de la Villehuchet was found sitting at his desk at about 8 a.m. with both wrists slashed, NYPD spokesman Paul Browne said. A box cutter was found on the floor along with a bottle of sleeping pills on his desk. Police did not find a suicide note.

De la Villehuchet was one of several money managers and investors left reeling in the wake of Madoff's alleged $50 billion Ponzi scheme, and his suicide demonstrates how the repercussions of this gigantic scam are intensifying by the day.

De la Villehuchet, 65, was a distinguished financier who came from a long line of aristocratic Frenchmen, and he tapped his connections in the world of European high society to attract clients to his firm, Access International Advisors. It was not immediately clear how he knew Madoff or who his clients were.

He grew increasingly subdued after the Madoff scandal broke, arousing suspicion among janitors in his Madison Avenue office tower Monday night when he demanded that they be out of there by 7 p.m. Less than 13 hours later, a security guard checked on him in his 22nd-story office suite. But de la Villehuchet was dead—a trash can placed near his body to apparently catch the blood, Browne said.

His death came as swindled investors began looking for ways to recoup their losses. Funds that lost big to Madoff are also coming up against investor lawsuits and backlash for failing to properly vet Madoff and overlooking some red flags that could have steered them away. It's not immediately known what kind of scrutiny de la Villehuchet was facing over his losses.

De la Villehuchet (pronounced veel-ou-SHAY) comes from rich French lineage, with the Magon part of his name referring to one of France's most powerful families. The Magon name is even listed on the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, a world-famous monument that was commissioned by Napoleon in 1806.

"He's irreproachable," said Bill Rapavy, who was Access International's chief operating officer before founding his own firm in 2007.

The Frenchman's firm enlisted intermediaries with links to upper-crust Europeans to garner investors. Among them was Philippe Junot, a French businessman and friend who is the former husband of Princess Caroline of Monaco, and Prince Michel of Yugoslavia.

Economy and housing sales post huge declines

WASHINGTON (AP)—The longest recession in a quarter century is snowballing, and some analysts warn that economic activity could plunge as much as 6 percent this quarter, which would be the largest decline since 1982.

While government figures released Tuesday for the third quarter showed only a 0.5 percent drop in the gross domestic product, a key indicator of economic health, two reports on home sales sketched a bleaker picture. Demand for both new and existing homes fell more sharply in November than expected.

In addition, GDP is likely falling at a sharper pace in the current quarter because of widening fallout from the worst financial crisis to hit the country since the Great Depression. If GDP does plunge 6 percent in the fourth quarter, it would be the sharpest such decline since a 6.4 percent drop in the first quarter of 1982.

"It will get a lot worse before it gets better," said Nariman Behravesh, chief economist at IHS Global Insight, a Lexington, Mass., forecasting firm. "We are in the midst of the worst recession in the postwar period, even factoring in a massive stimulus program."

Economists said they saw no likelihood of a quick turnaround in housing or the overall economy, given that the credit markets remain locked despite a $700 billion financial rescue package and billions of dollars of loans supplied by the Federal Reserve. Mortgage financing has dried up for many potential buyers, further damaging a housing industry struggling with a tide of foreclosures.

Wall Street pulled back in quiet trading ahead of the holiday after the reports were released Tuesday morning. The Dow Jones industrial average finished lower for the fifth straight day, falling 100 points to close about 8,419.

Dow falls for 5th straight session on grim reports

NEW YORK (AP)—Wall Street pulled back again Tuesday in muted trading ahead of the holiday, as another round of reports showed further deterioration in the housing market and broader economy.

The Dow Jones industrial average finished lower for the fifth straight day, falling 100 points.

Tuesday's gloomy data was hardly surprising to jaded investors. And trading volume has been light this week, which tends to skew the market's movements; many traders are on vacation for Christmas, and the market will close early, at 1 p.m. EST, on Wednesday.

"It is a very quiet news week, and much of it has already been priced into the market," said Ryan Larson, head of equity trading at Voyageur Asset Management.

The reports offered Wall Street no reason to be upbeat, however, and the concern remains that the economy will keep weakening well into the new year. That anxiety is sapping the hope for a year-end rally in the Dow, which is has fallen 36.5 percent since 2008 began.

The Commerce Department reiterated Tuesday that third-quarter gross domestic product, a measure of the economy that tallies the value of goods and services, fell at an annual rate of 0.5 percent.

The government also said sales of new homes fell in November to the slowest pace in nearly 18 years, while prices of new homes dropped by the biggest amount in eight months.

Sales of existing homes keep dropping as well. The National Association of Realtors said existing home sales fell 8.6 percent to an annual rate of 4.49 million in November from a downwardly revised pace of 4.91 million in October. That was more than analysts expected.

The Dow Jones industrial average shed 100.28, or 1.18 percent, to 8,419.49. The Dow is well off the multiyear lows it tumbled to in mid-November, but it is still down more than 400 points, or 4.6 percent, so far for the month of December. Typically, December is the one of the best months for the stock market.



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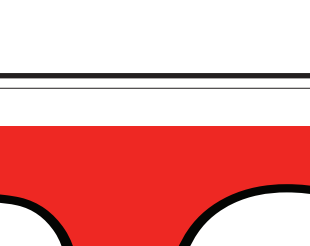
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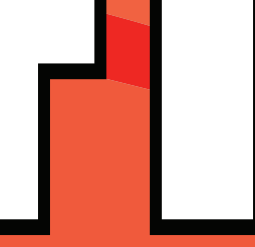

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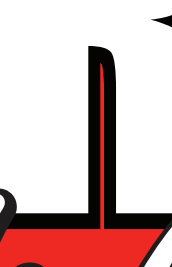

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Nation

Huge water main break traps motorists on Md. road

BETHESDA, Md. (AP)—A massive, aging water main ruptured Tuesday, transforming a suburban Washington road into a raging river and trapping nine motorists who had to be rescued from the frigid deluge by emergency workers in helicopters and boats.

The water gushed down River Road and rocked cars. Two people in a minivan were plucked by helicopter out of the roaring rapids, water crashing and spraying around them as they were lifted to safety in a basket. Other motorists escaped 4-feet deep water by boat.

Montgomery County fire officials said five people were checked for hypothermia; temperatures outside were in the 20s.

"The water tumbled over the car like a wave," said Silvia Saldana, of Springfield, Va., who was traveling to work when she became trapped. "I started to pray."

Fire spokesman Pete Piringer said crews had trouble getting to people because of the swift-moving water. Officials said 150,000 gallons of water per minute were rushing out at one point, spilling rocks and other debris onto the road.

Trees fell onto a power line and knocked down a utility pole. Schools in the county closed early because of widespread water outages, and a hospital where three people rescued were treated and released diverted ambulances and closed its trauma division because of lost water pressure.

Hebert De Rienzo tried to turn his small hatchback around as the road turned into a river, but there wasn't enough time. Water began rising in and around the car, splashing on De Rienzo and his fiancee. Christmas presents were ruined.

"We couldn't open the windows because the water would come through," he said. "We were scared."

A man who lives about 50 feet from the street described the unexpected flood after the pipe, about 5 1/2 feet in diameter, ruptured.

"I thought it might be a minor leak, then suddenly I stepped outside and, 'My God!'" said Raj Bhansaly. "It looked literally like the Potomac River."

From his house, Bhansaly said he saw two cars tied to rescue vehicles with ropes.

Firefighter Anthony Bell was on a fire truck when he saw brown water on the road and realized something wasn't right.

"We were wondering if we could make the rescue," he said. Bell and other firefighters raced through the water and pulled four people from three cars.

"I've been here 20 years," he said, "and I've never seen anything like this."

John White, a Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission spokesman, said it was not yet clear what caused the break.

Because of the water's intensity, fire officials did not allow utility workers to immediately shut down valves where the break occurred, White said. But crews were able to shut down valves farther down the pipeline, stopping the flow. Authorities said the water flowed into a nearby creek.



AP

Cars are trapped in water from a water main break on River Road near Fenway Drive in Bethesda, Md. on Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2008.

Shirtless images of Obama cause stir online

WASHINGTON (AP)—Forget Barack Obama's staff making contact with a governor charged with corruption. What's got everyone talking is the president-elect's fine first form.

"FIT FOR OFFICE: Buff Bam is Hawaii hunk," the New York Post gushed on its cover Tuesday above a photo of the future president strolling without a shirt in Hawaii. The Drudge Report called him "President Beefcake" while TMZ said the president-elect is "still humble enough to do laundry—ON HIS ABS!"

The photos were distributed by Bauer-Griffin, a photo agency more typically found on the corners of Hollywood. Photographer Chris Behnke simply strolled along the beach to get the shot, said agency co-owner Frank Griffin.

Obama "wasn't hiding. He was completely out in the open," Griffin said. "We didn't by any stretch of the imagination expect to get the images we got."

Griffin said Behnke had gone to the beach to get general views of the estate where Obama is vacationing, but instead found easy access to a view of the first family hitting the beach. "We use the expression, 'He gave it up,' " Griffin said.

Members of the press corps traveling with Obama have been careful to respect his privacy. A spokesman traveling with Obama in Hawaii did not have immediate comment.

Griffin said he doesn't expect his agency to stake out Washington on a regular basis, but added that Obama is "now the world's biggest celebrity, just after Angelina and Brad. I guess they're neck and neck right now."

The celebrity description is apt, even if Obama faces a plummeting economy and two wars upon entering office. He's seen as often on "Access Hollywood" as on the nightly news, and appears in "Us Weekly" with the regularity of a Jennifer Aniston.



AP

In this Aug. 14, 2008, file photo people on the beach call out to Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., as he heads back into the water while body-surfing in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Bush pardons man who helped Israel during wartime

WASHINGTON (AP)—In a gesture of forgiveness for a decades-old offense, President George W. Bush on Tuesday granted a pardon posthumously to a man who broke the law to supply aircraft to Jews fighting in Israel's 1948 war of independence.

Charles Winters, a Miami businessman considered a hero in Israel, was listed in a batch of 19 pardons and one commutation that Bush issued before leaving for Camp David to spend the holidays. No high-profile lawbreakers were on the list.

Winters' son, Jim, had found out about his father's daring missions and imprisonment only after his death in 1984.

"I'm overwhelmed," Jim Winters, a Miami maker of artistic neon signs, said in a telephone interview. "It happened 16 years before I was born. He went to jail and he didn't want his kids to know. He was old-school and proud."

Members of the Jewish community, who adorned his father's funeral with blue and white flowers symbolic of the Israeli flag, filled in details about his father's past. His obituary in The Miami Herald read, "Charles Winters, 71, aided birth of Israel."

In the summer of 1948, Winters, a Protestant from Boston who exported produce, worked with others to transfer two converted B-17 "Flying Fortresses" to Israel's defense forces. He personally flew one of the aircraft from Miami to Czechoslovakia, where that plane and a third B-17 were retrofitted for use as bombers.

Obama, 2 aides met with Blagojevich investigators

WASHINGTON (AP)—President-elect Barack Obama and two of his top aides met last week with federal investigators building a corruption case against Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich, accused of trying to swap Obama's Senate seat for cash or a lucrative job.

The interviews with Obama, along with incoming chief of staff Rahm Emanuel and adviser Valerie Jarrett, were disclosed Tuesday in an internal report produced for Obama on contacts with Blagojevich. The report supported Obama's insistence last week that there had been no inappropriate contact with the governor's office by Obama or his staff.

Obama delayed releasing his report until U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald's staff had completed the interviews with Obama and his two top aides, incoming White House attorney Greg Craig said in the review he wrote for Obama.

Obama, who was accompanied by lawyer Robert Bauer in the interview, had no contact with the governor or his aides, the report states. Prosecutors have said Obama is not implicated in the case.

"We are satisfied there was nothing inappropriate that took place here, either in terms of conversations or communications or contacts, between transition officials and the governor's office," Craig said after releasing the report.

Emanuel was the only Obama transition team member who discussed the Senate appointment with Blagojevich, and those conversations were "totally appropriate and acceptable," Craig said Tuesday. No one on Obama's transition team discussed any deals or had any knowledge of deals, Craig's report said.

ACROSS THE NATION

Amtrak trains delayed by bitter cold, snowstorms

CHICAGO (AP)—On one of the biggest travel days of the year, hundreds of Amtrak passengers bound for holiday destinations hunkered down in waiting rooms—some for nearly 24 hours—as snowstorms and Arctic cold delayed their trains and disrupted other Christmas traffic. Don and Barbara Seifert of Prophetstown, Ill., spent a sleepless, frustration-filled night at Chicago's Union Station with hundreds of angry customers. After waiting 12 hours for their New York-bound train to depart, their breath visible in the frigid indoor air, the Seiferts finally abandoned plans to visit their son and his family for the holidays. "It's spoiled our Christmas, sure," 73-year-old Don Seifert said Tuesday before he and his wife headed back to their western Illinois home. Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari said crews in some cities headed out with picks and shovels to clear snow-packed track switches; elsewhere, trains were held back to give lavatory pipes time to thaw.

Police: Dallas shooting suspect is ex-Utah trooper

DALLAS (AP)—A man suspected in a series of rush hour shootings near Dallas is a former Utah state trooper wanted on burglary and robbery warrants who apparently shot himself after a standoff with police, authorities said Tuesday Brian Smith, 37, killed at least one of the victims of Monday's shootings, Dallas police Lt. Craig Miller said. Investigators tied Smith to a killing in Dallas because by matching the bullets found at the standoff, he said. "We feel safe in saying (Smith) ... was the shooter," Miller said. Dallas police declined to comment on a second death in neighboring Garland, where the standoff took place, because it was out of their jurisdiction. Garland police spokesman Joe Harn said his department has not been able to make a definitive connection between Smith and the killing there, but acknowledged that he fit the description of the highway shooter: a balding, 40ish white man.

Asia

Passengers trapped on world's largest Ferris wheel

SINGAPORE (AP)—Fire broke out in the control room of the world's largest Ferris wheel Tuesday, trapping 173 people hundreds of feet above the ground for hours and forcing rescuers to lower 10 passengers to safety by rope.

Two passengers were hospitalized with minor ailments.

During the six hour-ordeal, passengers were able to talk with officials via intercom and rescuers tethered to harnesses brought them sandwiches and soft drinks, said general manager Steven Yeo.

"It took a while," Yeo said. "Some of them were a bit disturbed." The 165-meter (541-foot) Flyer, which has carried 2 million passengers so far, is about 100 feet (30 meters) taller than the London Eye, formerly the world's tallest Ferris wheel. It was built by Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industries.

Technicians were able to get the wheel moving again a little more than six hours after it ground to a halt and most of the passengers exited normally, Yeo said.

The wheel, known as the Singapore Flyer, has stalled twice before for about an hour each time since it began operating in February.

"This is the first time that something of this nature has happened, where people were hospitalized," Yeo said.

A 70-year-old woman complaining of dizziness and a 10-year-old boy who vomited were taken by ambulance to a hospital, Civil Defense Colonel N Subhas said.

The 10 passengers closest to the ground were evacuated by harnesses attached to ropes, and civil defense rescuers were planning to bring the rest of the passengers to safety the same way when the wheel's power was restored, Subhas said.

The Flyer was to shut down for at least one day to allow for repairs and an investigation, Yeo said.



AP

Rescue workers evacuate a passenger from a capsule of the Singapore Flyer on Tuesday Dec. 23, 2008, in Singapore.

Documents offer look at big tobacco's Asia tactics

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—Two of the world's largest tobacco companies, seeking to expand sales into Asia, worked to undermine anti-smoking policies in Thailand and China by infiltrating one research institute and funding another, researchers said Tuesday.

The allegations—highlighted in two separate studies—come as tobacco companies are aggressively marketing cigarettes in the developing world as lawsuits and anti-smoking laws hit revenues in the West.

"As the high income countries put more and more obstacles in the path of the cigarette companies, they have to look for new markets," said Edouard Tursan d'Espaignet, epidemiologist with the WHO's Tobacco Free Initiative.

Critics said tobacco companies are trying to drum up sales by minimizing the dangers of smoking.

In Thailand, Philip Morris, the world largest cigarette maker, planted a scientist in Chulabhorn Research Institute in Bangkok in a bid to get researchers to shift their attention away from secondhand smoking and toward other forms of air pollution, according to one study. Public health researchers from the University of Sydney and the University of Edinburgh produced the study by analyzing internal industry documents made public following litigation in the United States.

A separate study alleges that British American Tobacco, the world's second-largest firm, provided funding in China for the Beijing Liver Foundation in a campaign to shift focus away from links between smoking and ailments such as liver disease.

Both companies denied the charges presented online in the Public Library of Science Medicine journal. The two studies were partly funded by the National Cancer Institute in the U.S.

However, longtime anti-smoking advocate Stanton Glanz said the tactics are "part of long-running and continuing tactics by the tobacco industry all over the world," and he called on the two Asian institutions to end their ties with the industry.

Anti-smoking groups say big tobacco for years has sought to covertly influence western government's smoking policies and squash scientific findings highlighting hazards of smoking.

Now, some charge, the tobacco countries are taking these time-tested tactics to the Asia, Africa and Latin America where the WHO estimates 80 percent of the 8 million tobacco-related deaths will occur by 2030.

The University of Sydney's Ross MacKenzie, who co-authored the Thai study, said that in Asia, tobacco companies have fought successfully to prevent the publication of ingredients used in their products in Thailand and worked in Cambodia to undermine advertising bans.

"They have shown they are willing to take advantage of economic situations and lax legislation in many Southeast Asian countries to aggressively market their products," MacKenzie said, citing previously released company documents.

In the Thai study, MacKenzie and University of Edinburgh's Jeff Collin allege that Philip Morris scientist Roger Walk lectured and organized conferences at the government-funded Chulabhorn from the early 1990s through 2006.

The researchers say this allowed Philip Morris to develop relationships with key officials and scientists in efforts to discount the threat of secondhand smoke.

Tainted milk scandal company declared bankrupt

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—A Chinese court has declared bankrupt the company at the center of a scandal over tainted milk—blamed for killing six children and sickening almost 300,000 more, one of the company's owners said Wednesday.

New Zealand's Fonterra Group said that a court in Shijiazhuang, in China's Hebei province, issued a bankruptcy order against Sanlu Group Co. in response to a petition from a creditor.

"Sanlu will now be managed by a court-appointed receiver who will assume responsibility for an orderly sale of the company's assets and payment of creditors," Fonterra chief executive Andrew Ferrier said in a statement.

Sanlu was one of 22 Chinese dairy companies whose products were found to contain high levels of the industrial chemical melamine, leading to the deaths of six babies and causing 294,000 others to suffer urinary problems.

Fonterra, a New Zealand farmer-owned cooperative, owns 43 percent of Sanlu.

At least a dozen individual lawsuits have been filed against state-owned Sanlu, but they are caught in a legal limbo as courts have neither accepted nor refused the cases—a sign of the scandal's political sensitivity.

China's government has promised free medical treatment to the children who fell ill, plus unspecified compensation to them and families of the dead.

The Health Ministry said earlier this month that some Chinese dairy companies would likely have to pay for a compensation plan, the details of which have not been released.

Japan's PM says he is not planning snap election

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's Prime Minister Taro Aso said Wednesday he would not call a snap election despite his plunging public approval ratings, saying he needs to focus on the country's sputtering economy.



Aso

Aso, who assumed office in September, said he wants to make sure the economy does not weaken further, and that it is not the right time to call elections.

Opposition leaders have demanded that Aso call a snap poll to prove he has a public mandate.

Aso can dissolve parliament and call elections at any time, but he does not need to do so for the lower house until their terms run out next September.

"We are not in a situation in which we can discuss such things," he said.

Public support for Japan's government has plummeted amid disappointment over the new prime minister's efforts to revive the economy. Surveys earlier this month by three major newspapers—the Yomiuri, Mainichi and Asahi—showed backing for opposition leader Ichiro Ozawa had risen above Aso for the first time.

The surveys, which show Aso's approval rating hovering near 20 percent, signal serious trouble for the prime minister. He took the helm of Japan's unpopular ruling party with a promise to revive public support and high expectations that he would call elections soon.

ASIAN BRIEFS

NKorean general threatens SKorea amid tensions

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea's defense minister accused the United States and South Korea on Tuesday of plotting war on the Korean peninsula and threatened to destroy the South if they attack. Defense Minister Kim Il Chol said in a speech in Pyongyang that his army would reduce South Korea to a "sea of fire" unless "pro-American warmongers hell-bent on igniting another war" stop their "rash acts." "A grave situation is prevailing on the Korean Peninsula due to the hostile policy of the U.S. imperialists and their followers," Kim said, according to the state Korean Central News Agency. North Korea's communist regime from time to time issues such verbal salvos during periods of tension between the two states on the divided peninsula. It has made similar threats several times, including in late October, since a conservative government took office in South Korea in February pledging to get tougher with Pyongyang.

Karzai attends memorial for 3 killed in US raid

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—President Hamid Karzai attended a memorial ceremony Tuesday for three Afghans killed in an overnight raid by U.S. forces, an incident Karzai has asked America's top military officer to investigate. The American military has said that its forces killed three people targeted as "known individuals with al-Qaida links" during a raid Dec. 17. Col. Greg Julian said the "insurgents" had weapons and tried to fire on the U.S. forces first. Afghan officials say the three killed were innocent Afghans, and Karzai on Monday asked Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to investigate the deaths The three killed were Amir Hassan, 40, his wife and a 14-year-old nephew, said Haji Balal Hassan, the brother of Amir Hassan. Balal Hassan said that Karzai shared his condolences during the ceremony in eastern Khost province and asked for details of the incident.

China sends pandas to Taiwan in charm offensive

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—China sent two of its prized giant pandas to Taiwan Tuesday, the latest installment of a charm offensive aimed at persuading the island's people to embrace their Communist rival. Millions of Taiwanese watched the televised arrival of Tuan Tuan, a male panda, and his female companion, Yuan Yuan, at Taipei airport. The pandas, the first to inhabit the island, are typically loaned in pairs with the hope they will mate. The giant panda is unique to China and is regularly sent abroad as a sign of warm diplomatic relations or to mark breakthroughs in ties. For more than five decades, Beijing has used panda diplomacy to make friends and influence people in countries ranging from the United States to the former Soviet Union. The delivery to Taiwan—more than three years in the making—comes amid rapidly improving relations between Taiwan and China, which split amid civil war in 1949.

World

WORLD BRIEFS

Mexican beauty queen arrested in gun-filled truck

GUADALAJARA, Mexico (AP)—A reigning Mexican beauty queen from the drug-plagued state of Sinaloa was arrested with suspected gang members in a truck filled guns and ammunition, police said Tuesday. Miss Sinaloa 2008 Laura Zuniga stared at the ground, with her flowing dark hair concealing her face, as she stood squeezed between seven alleged gunmen lined up before journalists. Soldiers wearing ski masks guarded the 23-year-old model and the suspects. Zuniga was arrested shortly before midnight on Monday at a military checkpoint in Zapopan, just outside the colonial city of Guadalajara, said Jalisco state police director, Francisco Alejandro Solorio. Zuniga was riding in one of two trucks, where soldiers found a large stash of weapons, including two AR-15 assault rifles, .38 specials, 9mm handguns, nine magazines, 633 cartridges and $53,300 in U.S. currency, Solorio said. State police identified one of the men caught with her as the brother of an alleged drug trafficker from Ciudad Juarez, a city on the U.S. border, and said the man appeared to have been her boyfriend.

Good heavens: Vatican rehabilitating Galileo

VATICAN CITY (AP)—Galileo Galilei is going from heretic to hero. The Vatican is recasting the most famous victim of its Inquisition as a man of faith, just in time for the 400th anniversary of Galileo's telescope and the U.N.-designated International Year of Astronomy next year. Pope Benedict XVI paid tribute to the Italian astronomer and physicist Sunday, saying he and other scientists had helped the faithful better understand and "contemplate with gratitude the Lord's works." In May, several Vatican officials will participate in an international conference to re-examine the Galileo affair, and top Vatican officials are now saying Galileo should be named the "patron" of the dialogue between faith and reason. It's quite a reversal of fortune for Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), who made the first complete astronomical telescope and used it to gather evidence that the Earth revolved around the sun. Church teaching at the time placed Earth at the center of the universe.

3 Gaza militants killed in clash on Israeli border

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israeli forces killed three Palestinian militants on the Gaza border Tuesday, the military and Israeli media said, in the deadliest clash since a truce between Israel and the Islamic Hamas rulers of Gaza expired over the weekend. Despite the violence, Israel decided to open three crossings to allow some food, supplies and fuel into Gaza, the Defense Ministry said late Tuesday. The clash and renewed rocket fire from Gaza after a one-day lull dampened hopes that the truce could be renewed quickly. Israel said three militants were spotted planting explosives in northern Gaza along the border fence. Soldiers crossed a few yards into Gaza and engaged the Palestinians, who threw grenades. The military said soldiers returned fire, hitting the three. Israeli media said they were killed, the first to die since the truce ended. There was no immediate Palestinian comment. In the past, militant groups have responded to such clashes with rocket barrages.

Coup declared in Guinea after dictator's death

CONAKRY, Guinea (AP)—A military group seized control of the airwaves in mineral-rich Guinea and declared a coup Tuesday after the death of the West African country's dictator, one of the continent's last strongmen. The turmoil raises the prospect of violence flaring in a region where neighbors Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast and Liberia all have been devastated by years of war.

A group calling itself the National Council for Democracy began announcing its takeover on state-run radio and TV just hours after the death of longtime dictator Lansana Conte was made public.

"The government is dissolved. The institutions of the republic are dissolved. ... From this moment on, the council is taking charge of the destiny of the Guinean people," said the coup leader, who identified himself as Capt. Moussa Camara.

Dozens of armed soldiers were seen heading toward the prime minister's office inside the country's presidential compound. They appeared less than an hour after Prime Minister Ahmed Tidiane Souare announced in a state broadcast that he was inside his office and his government had not been dissolved.

An Associated Press reporter later saw two tanks parked near the compound and a third circulating through the capital. A fourth was parked at the headquarters of state-run radio and TV, where transmissions had been cut.

Guinea's Army Chief of Staff Gen. Diarra Camara said the motives of the coup leaders were unclear.

"I think they are in a minority. They are not unanimously backed by the army for the time being. I don't know their real objectives," Camara told French international news television channel France 24.

In his takeover announcement, the coup leader said presidential elections would be held within 60 days and an interim president and prime minister would be appointed. The coup leaders were meeting late Tuesday to decide who would head the interim government, said Aboubacar Sompare, president of the National Assembly.

He said three candidates being considered: coup leader Moussa Camara, army chief Toto Camara and Col. Sekouba Konate, who heads an elite army unit.

The U.S. Embassy in Conakry said there had been no reports of fighting or casualties "but the situation remains fluid and uncertain at this time."



AP

In this Feb. 26, 2002 file photo, King Mohammed VI of Morocco, center, greets Guinea's President Lansana Conte, left, and Sierra Leone's President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah at the Rabat, Morocco.

European countries mull taking in Gitmo detainees

LONDON (AP)—When the U.S. government asked years ago that countries take in detainees freed from the Guantanamo military prison, only tiny Albania answered the call.

The rest of Europe had long criticized the U.S. military detention center in Cuba and the Bush administration for opening it in January 2002 to hold so-called "enemy combatants" accused of having links to the al-Qaida terror network or Afghanistan's ousted Taliban regime.

Now Europe appears to be open to helping, as President-elect Barack Obama has pledged to close the prison. Most Europeans held in Guantanamo have been returned to their home countries, but U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates has called for proposals for transferring the remaining 250 or so detainees—amid concerns that some could be persecuted if sent back to their home nations.

Most come from Yemen, but others are from Azerbaijan, Algeria, Afghanistan, Chad, China and Saudi Arabia. Some have been held without charge since the prison camp opened.

Portugal, France, Germany and Switzerland said they would consider taking in some of the remaining detainees.

"We've encouraged other nations to accept detainees from Guantanamo, and we're pleased with the recent discussions," Pentagon spokesman Navy Cmdr. Jeffrey Gordon said Tuesday, adding that U.S. authorities wanted to make sure the detainees—if released—would not be mistreated or pose a threat to the international community.

The U.S. military had said it would prosecute about 70 prisoners in military tribunals, but fewer than 20 have been charged. It is unclear what would happen to them should the detention camp be shut and the trials halted.

France is considering hosting Guantanamo detainees, a French diplomat said Tuesday on condition of anonymity in line with government policy, but added that a Europe-wide discussion was needed first.

A lawyer who defended ex-Guantanamo inmates in French courts, William Bourdon, said the French government was in discussions to take in former prisoners.

"There is an obligation of solidarity with these people who were held for so long without legal recourse," Bourdon said, without citing his source for the discussions or giving further details about them.

Iraqi parliament ousts Sunni speaker, OKs non-US troops

BAGHDAD (AP)—Iraq's fractious parliament squeezed its abrasive speaker out of a job Tuesday and authorized non-U.S. foreign troops to stay in the country for another half-year, a pair of high-stakes moves in its final session of 2008.

The resignation of Sunni speaker Mahmoud al-Mashhadani capped a long-running power struggle with Shiite and Kurdish lawmakers and even members of his own party. Lawmakers applauded his announcement, quickly approved it, then passed a measure allowing Britain's 4,000 troops and several smaller contingents from other countries to stay through July.

"I do believe that I was faithful to doing good work," al-Mashhadani said in his address to the chamber where he often offended other lawmakers. "If I caused hurt to you, I ask your forgiveness."

The authorization for foreign troops became entangled in al-Mashhadani's quarrel with Kurdish and Shiite lawmakers last week, when he shouted insults at some of them and threatened to resign because "there is no honor in leading this parliament."

His opponents ultimately forced him to keep his word. As a negotiating ploy, al-Mashhadani tried to delay until Jan. 7 the vote on the troops resolution—a week after the Dec. 31 expiration of the U.N. mandate authorizing the presence of foreign troops in Iraq.

Zimbabwe faces bleak Christmas amid food crisis

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP)—At overflowing garbage dumps in Zimbabwe's capital, desperate vagrants pounced on trash bags and fought over chicken bones and scraps of discarded food. Sewage clogged streets and most shopkeepers didn't even bother with holiday decorations.

In crumbling, largely Christian Zimbabwe, where a cholera epidemic has killed more than 1,100 people, Christmas is just another day of suffering.

"There is nothing for us to celebrate. Christmas is a story of hunger," said Monica Rugare. "It is just another day of poverty, the way we are living today."

The country's Christmas tradition of city dwellers heading to the countryside with gifts of food and clothing for their relatives isn't possible this year. Annual church carol services have been subdued, if they were held at all.

On Tuesday, children found a bit of cheer playing in the stinking water gushing from a broken sewer in the impoverished Harare neighborhood of Braeside.

Ten-year-old Kudzai Urere, ignoring the warnings from cholera-conscious adults as she leaped about in the murky water, said her mother had gone to search for food and would not be home until nightfall.

When she did return, she would be lucky to bring home vegetables, not toys or candy.

In this country of glaring inequities, there are some who do have the leisure and cash for pastimes like golf, even if they can't escape the stench of chaos.

The sewage flowing down the streets of Braeside emptied into a stream already swollen by heavy seasonal rains. The foul-smelling water ran through a nearby golf course where a few players moved gingerly around it on the fifth fairway Tuesday.

Environment

A drop reduced, a drop saved

PepsiCo, Pinellas County Utilities named water efficiency leaders

Water efficiency is critical to the growing U.S. economy and quality of life. Water Efficiency Leaders are being recognized for their contributions in reducing, reusing and recycling water through leadership, innovation and water saved.

"Water is America's greatest liquid asset," said Benjamin H. Grumbles, EPA's assistant administrator for water. "EPA commends these water champions for saving water and energy, and increasing the health and wealth of communities and ecosystems."



ON THE NET

Water Efficiency Leaders: http://www.epa.gov/water/wel/

The leaders are made up of utilities, individuals, corporations, non-governmental organizations and government.

This year's winners are:

■ Pinellas County Utilities (Clearwater, Fla.) - Utilities - Pinellas County is one of the most water-efficient utilities per capita at 89 gallons per person per day (gpd), versus the national average of 100 gpd. Since 1991, per capita efficiency has improved more than 40 percent.

■ PepsiCo (Purchase, N.Y.) - Corporate/Industry – PepsiCo has improved water efficiency across its brands and is on target to reduce water consumption per unit of production by 20 percent by 2015.

■ Acequia (Austin, Texas) - Corporate/Industry - Across the nearly 70 commercial properties for which it provides landscape irrigation, Acequia has sustained measured reductions of irrigation water by 54 percent since 2002.

■ Commissioner Robert J. Hunter (Atlanta, Ga.) – Individual - Under Commissioner Hunter's leadership during recent droughts, the city's 50 largest water customers cut their water consumption by 45 percent. Hunter also promoted water saving options and high efficiency toilet rebate programs to users and plumbers.

■ Homewise, Inc. (Santa Fe, N.M.) - Non-governmental Organization - Homewise is recognized for smartly mixing consumer information, on-site homeowner installation assistance, marketing, and consumer lending into a unified program to reduce homeowner water consumption. In 2005, Homewise initiated its Watersmart Program, which as of May 2008 had helped 595 households reduce water use by an estimated 64 percent.

■ Orange County Water District (Orange County, Calif.) - Government - Orange County Water District is recognized for world leadership in wastewater purification for groundwater replenishment. Their system of replenishing groundwater can generate enough water to meet the needs of 500,000 people. ***(EPA)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation For Bid
IFB 09-005

The Public School System is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the purchase, delivery, installation, and assembly of **Desktop Computer Systems and Accessories for Hopwood Jr. High School (HJHS)**. Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 09-005" containing one (1) original and three (3) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office, no later than **January 14, 2009 at 10:00 a.m.** Responsibility Determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "IFB 09-005" CONFIDENTIAL — Responsibility Determination" (one (I)-original and three (3)-copies). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Juan D. Babauta, Acting, Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, questions may be e-mailed to the following address: ***babautajd@pss.cnmi.mp.***

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the CNMI Public School System.

/S/ Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Juan D. Babauta
Acting, Procurement & Supply Officer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP 09-005

The CNMI Public School System is soliciting competitive sealed proposals for the **Supply of Diesel, Unleaded Gasoline, Lubricating Oil, and Fluids for its School Bus and Vehicle Fleets.**

Detailed information on the scope of work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All proposals shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "RFP 09-005" containing one (1) original and three (3) copies and shall be submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than January 07, 2009 at 2:00 p.m. Responsibility determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "RFP 09-005, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination", containing one (1) original and three (3) copies). Any proposal after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Juan D. Babauta, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, questions may be e-mailed to the following address: *babautajd@pss.cnmi.mp.*

Contractors are required to submit with their proposal, a copy of their valid business license.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All proposals shall become the property of the Public School System.

/S/ Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Juan D. Babauta
Acting, P&S Officer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP 09-007

The CNMI Public School System (PSS) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals for Cellular Services, Long Distance Services, TI Circuits to the Islands of Tinian and Rota, Off Island T1 Circuit (s), Basic Network Equipment Maintenance and PBX Equipment Maintenance.

Detailed information on the scope of work will be made available on or after December 18, 2008 at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rdfloor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands during regular PSS working hours. Proposals shall be submitted in a sealed envelope containing one (1) original signed proposal and three (3) copies face marked "PSS RFP 09-007." Responsibility determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope face marked "RFP 09-007, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" containing one(1) original and three (3) copies. Responsibility documents will not be available for public viewing without the prior consent of the contractor.

All proposals shall be delivered to the PSS Procurement & Supply Office no later than 4:00 p.m., January 19, 2009. Any proposal submitted after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

A pre-submission conference will be held on December 29, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. at the PSS Board of Education Conference Room located on the 2nd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building. All questions shall be delivered in writing to the PSS Procurement & Supply Officer, Attn: E-Rate (RFP 09-007) or sent via facsimile or e-mail no later than January 6, 2009 at 4:00p.m., local time. Please be advised of the following contact information: Facsimile: 670-664-3791; Email: babautajd@pss.cnmi.mp

PSS reserves the right to award a single or multiple awards, or award multiple parts of this RFP to a single contractor, or to reject any or all proposals or to cancel in whole or in part this solicitation if to do so is in the best interest of PSS.

/S/ Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Juan D. Babauta
Acting, P&S Officer

Life & Style

Tina Fey voted AP Entertainer of the Year



AP

In this April 22, 2008 file photo Tina Fey makes an appearance on MTV's Total Request Live at MTV Studios in New York. Fey was voted The Associated Press' Entertainer of the Year.

Tina Fey is the entertainer of the year? You betcha. Fey was voted The Associated Press' Entertainer of the Year, an annual honor chosen by newspaper editors and broadcast producers across the country.

Fey was selected by AP members as the performer who had the greatest impact on culture and entertainment in 2008.

The 38-year-old comedian bested runner-up Robert Downey Jr., whose comeback was capped with the blockbuster smash "Iron Man," and the third-place vote-getter, Heath Ledger, who posthumously wowed audiences as the Joker in "The Dark Knight." But it was Fey who most impressed voters largely with her indelible impression of Gov. Sarah Palin on "Saturday Night Live." Her cameos on her old show (where she had been a head writer until 2006) helped drive the show to record ratings and eventually drew an appearance from Palin herself.

"Tina Fey is such an obvious choice," said Sharon Eberson, entertainment editor of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. "She gave us funny when we really needed it and, in a year when women in politics were making huge strides, Fey stood out in the world of entertainment."

Fey's 2008 was a full year, though.

She also starred for the first time on the big screen in "Baby Mama" (which grossed $60 million at the box office) and won three Emmys for her critically lauded NBC sitcom "30 Rock," which she created, stars in and writes. In the comedy series category, she won for best lead actress and best writing, and shared in the award for best comedy series.

"She simultaneously entertained us with her wit and put a mirror up to the nation during the election and made us think about what was going on," said Scott Shive, assistant features editor at the Lexington Herald-Leader. "She is the epitome of the smart kid coming out on top for once."

As soon as Palin was chosen as Sen. John McCain's running mate, conjecture mounted that the similar-looking Fey would have to return to "SNL" to play her.

In an interview earlier this fall, Fey recalled watching early TV coverage of Palin: "That was the first time I thought, `Well, I kinda do look like her. I'd better really listen to how this lady talks.'"

Fey debuted the impression on the "SNL" season premiere and a sensation quickly followed. She made four more pre-election appearances as Palin on the late-night satire.

"From the winks to the nods to the accent, she nailed it," said Marc Bona, assistant entertainment editor of the Plain Dealer in Cleveland. "And she did so at a time when it seemed the whole country was tuned in—both to the presidential race as well as 'Saturday Night Live.'"

Her Palin impression has benefited "30 Rock," too. The show premiered its fourth season to 8.5 million viewers, a million more than last year's opener.

Recently, she was also nominated for a Golden Globe (for best performance by an actress in a TV series, comedy or musical), as well as a Screen Actors Guild award.

"The `SNL' stuff has certainly changed things for me," Fey said in October. "A lot more people seem to know who I am."

Last year's AP Entertainer of the Year also went to a comedian whose satire blended in with politics: Stephen Colbert. ***(AP)***

In Loving Memory of

Gaudencia I. Sablan

(Gauden/Dinga)

May 30, 1956 — December 19, 2008

was called to her eternal rest at the age of 52.



Gauden will be greeted at the gates of heaven by her:

Parents: †Simon E. Ilal and †Rita F. Ilal

Brother & Sisters: †Cornelia Fitial, †Clara F. Ilal and †Henry F. Ilal

Parents In-Law: †David S. Sablan and †Engracia O. Sablan

She will always be remembered in the hearts of:

Husband: Benigno O. Sablan

Children & Spouse: Rita I. Tarope
Melycher I. Sablan (Benicia Mariden Lowailei I. Sablan)
Benigno I. Sablan Jr. (Cora K. Norita)

Rear Children: Marvin M. Ngeskebei
Auden M. Ngeskebei

Brother/Sisters and Spouse: Manuel Fitial/†Elisa N. Fitial and children
Bernadita F. Ilal and children
Mariana F. Ilal (Simon Ilal)
Laurencia F. Ilal/†Joaquin Igisomar

Brother/Sister In-Laws/Spouse: Henry O. Sablan/Regina M. Sablan and children
Angie S. Iba/†Jose S. Iba and children
Thomas O. Sablan/Sue L. Sablan and children
David O. Sablan/Bernadita M.Sablan and children
†Nancy S. Iginoef/Ismael W. Iginoef and children
Rosita S. Waldron/Brad Waldron (David S. Waldron)

She is also survived by numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, godchildren and friends.

Daily rosary are being offered at the family's residence in Chalan Laulau at 7:30 p.m. On Saturday, December 27, 2008 the remains of the late will leave CHC at 7:00 a.m. and will be escorted to the family's residence in Chalan Laulau for viewing and responso. At 2:30 p.m. the body will be escorted to Mt. Carmel Cathedral for the Christian Mass at 3:00 p.m. and interment will follow at the Chalan Kanoa Cemetery.

Your thoughts and prayers are kindly appreciated.

Thank you, Ghiliisow and Si Yu'us Ma'ase.

From the husband, children and family

A 90-minute makeup session turns actor into Shrek

NEW YORK (AP)—It's a little after 6 p.m. in the star dressing room at the Broadway Theatre, where a sign on the door warns: "Do not disturb. Shrek makeup in progress."

In progress—and moving methodically along.

Two makeup artists—Dave Presto and Angela Johnson—work quickly and quietly on Brian d'Arcy James, transforming the affable, soft-spoken actor into a mean, green ogre, the title character in "Shrek the Musical," a lavish new stage version of the DreamWorks animated movie.

There is an almost Zen-like tranquility to the scene. Music drifts quietly from a radio; a fan whirls softly. And James, wearing a white bathrobe that covers a spiffy, striped blue shirt and almost hides his crisp jeans, looks positively relaxed, his eyes often closed during the 90-minute makeover.

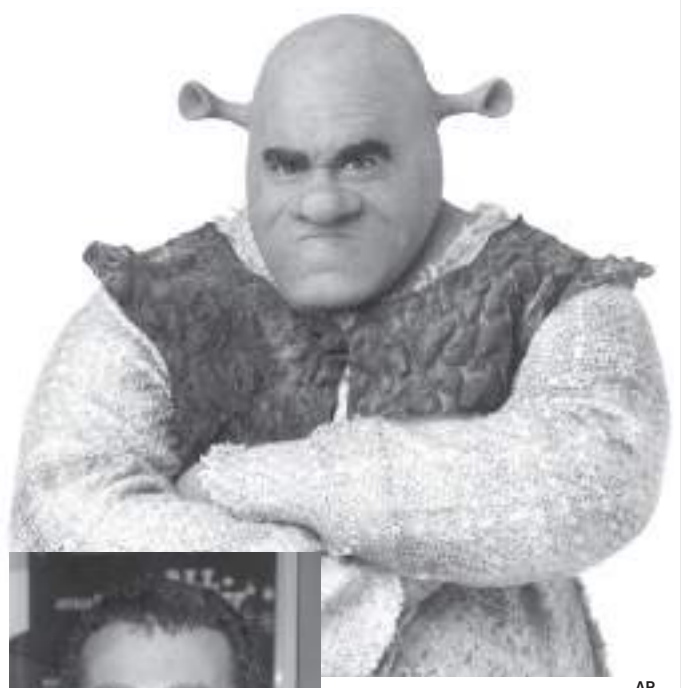
He sits in a black-leather barber chair placed in front of a mirror in the large, brightly lighted dressing room, once the home of such Tony winners as Patti LuPone in "Evita," Jonathan Pryce in "Miss Saigon" and, more recently, LaChanze in "The Color Purple."

"It's the biggest makeup show ever," says Johnson, production makeup supervisor for the musical, as she works on the right side of James' face. Presto, billed as the Shrek makeup artist, is on the left.

After all, this is a fairy-tale musical and there are other creatures, including several other green ogres, as well as Donkey, Pinocchio, the Three Bears and more to get ready to paint.

After a rubber skull cap is placed on James' head, these artisans get down to work, gluing and painting the various pieces of prosthetics that will turn James head and neck into the top half of Shrek. Their instruments of choice? Long cotton swabs and small brushes, which they use with delicate, small strokes.

"The amount of glue applied to each actor is unprecedented," says James during one of the moments he is allowed to talk during the transformation.



AP

In this file image released by Dreamworks Theatricals, Brian d'Arcy James stars as Shrek in "Shrek The Musical."



AP

This Oct. 16, 2008 file photo shows actor Brian d'Arcy James arriving at the opening night play of "All My Sons" on Broadway in New York.

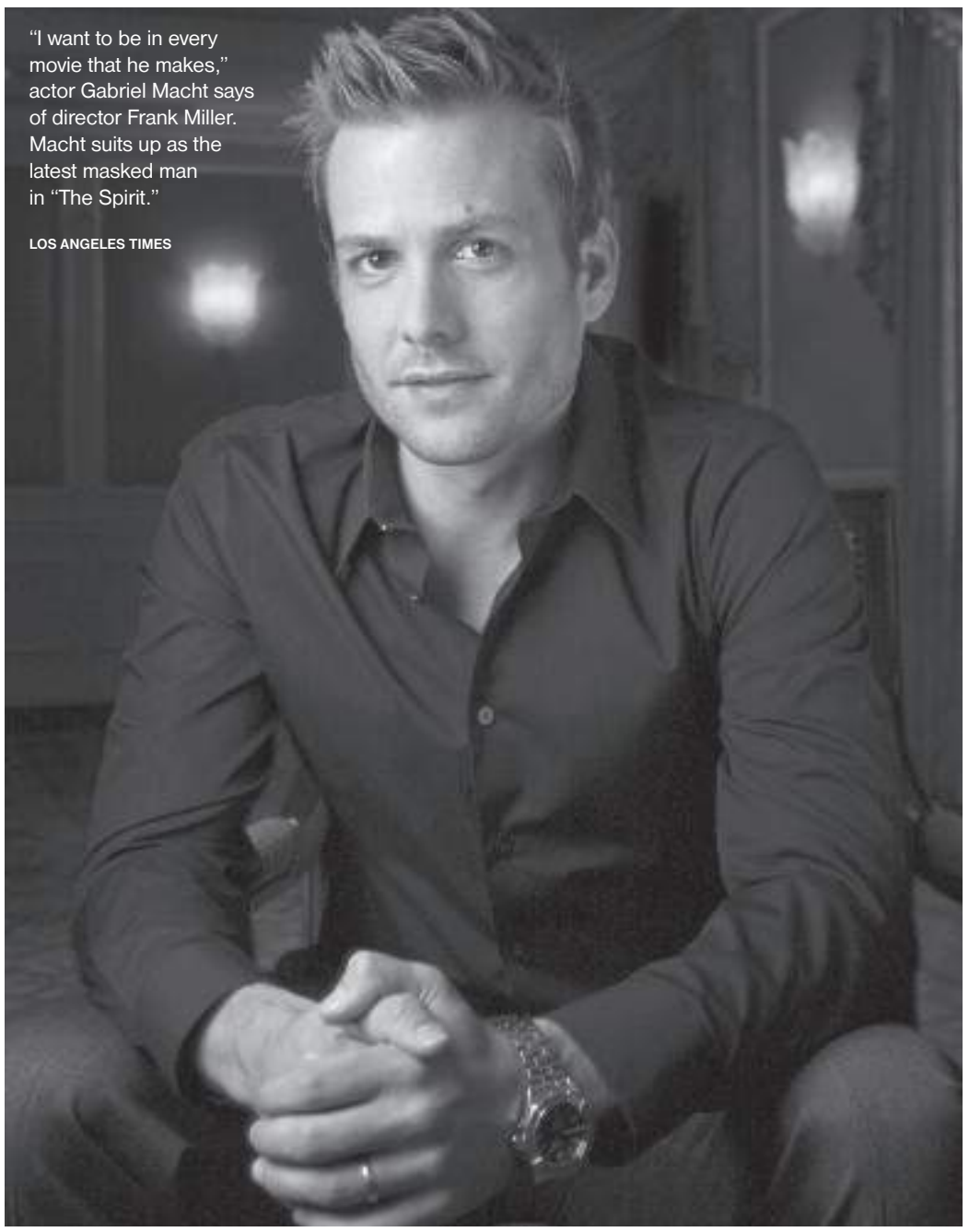
"You literally have to put on a skin, a thick skin, as it were," James continues. "The makeup has an effect on how I move my head, my neck ... and how it looks in conjunction with my body."

Standing by is James' dresser, Jack Scott, ready to help the actor put on the costume that will complete the change-over. Check out the huge green hands that slip onto James' fingers like gloves.

And when the transformation is done, there's Shrek, complete with a Scottish accent, ready to face that evening's audience. And what is that green ogre singing as he warms up those vocal cords? A show tune, of course: "I Feel Pretty" from "West Side Story."

A throwback superhero

By GEOFF BOUCHER
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES



"I want to be in every movie that he makes," actor Gabriel Macht says of director Frank Miller. Macht suits up as the latest masked man in "The Spirit."

LOS ANGELES TIMES

HOLLYWOOD—Once upon a time, superhero roles were considered career-killers. But not anymore, not with Christian Bale, Will Smith, Robert Downey Jr. and Hugh Jackman proving that if the glove fits, you should wear it. Still, for Gabriel Macht, who suits up as the latest masked man in "The Spirit," which opens Christmas Day, there are new and different risks in this modern era of cinematic crime fighting.

For one thing, there's the danger of being upstaged by the bad guy, who in "The Spirit" happens to be the nefarious Octopus, a near-invulnerable crime boss played with great zeal by Samuel L. Jackson. Macht first got a sense of that threat while doing an informal script read-through with his future costar.

"I needed earplugs when Samuel L. Jackson started doing lines, he had the volume at 11," Macht said with a bewildered smile a year after the table read. "Look, when actors come to read-through in Hollywood they don't give anything; everything is a whisper. They're not risking, they're not showing anything, and they're not trying to do stuff with the character. The attitude is: 'Put on a camera, get me lights and makeup and hair and wardrobe, that's when I'll perform.' Not Sam. He shows up and he was screaming and went crazy. It lifted everyone. And I knew way back then that we were going to be taking chances in this movie."

And "The Spirit" is absolutely a film that cranks the volume and goes for broke. The movie aspires to mint a leading man out of Macht, who may be a veteran of the New York stage and a graduate of Carnegie Mellon School of Drama but has a Hollywood resume of supporting roles and indie fare. The movie is the solo directorial debut of Frank Miller, the acclaimed comic book creator, and, like his artwork in the pages of "300" and "Sin City," "The Spirit" is a stylized visual swirl that instantly divided viewers into love-it-or-hate-it factions at screenings.

One person who is clearly in love with the outsized action is Jackson, who bellows and stomps his way through cartoonish monologues and changes his costumes more often than Cher. Early in the film, he and Macht (who both play characters that bounce back from injury better than Wile E. Coyote) hit each other with fists, an oversized wrench and a toilet in a showdown that might be called a battle royale with cheese. The film also features a squadron of beautiful actresses, including Scarlett Johansson, Eva Mendes, Jaime King, Paz Vega and Sarah Paulson, who play women who alternately want to kiss or kill Macht's bulletproof hero, who is a sort of Don Juan meets Dick Tracy and calls himself the Spirit.

Macht, now a month shy of his 37th birthday, has been an actor since age 8 (he is the son of television actor Stephen Macht) and is consolidating his career in Hollywood after his past stage work. He costarred with John Travolta and Johansson in the 2004 film "A Love Song for Bobby Long" and was cast by Robert De Niro in his film "The Good Shepherd." Macht also played the doomed cosmic-country singer Gram Parsons in "Grand Theft Parsons" and, keeping the music theme, one of his favorite stage roles was when he played Elvis Presley in the off-Broadway production of Steve Martin's "Picasso at the Lapin Agile."

On a recent afternoon, Macht took a reporter along for an afternoon hike up his favorite trail in the Hollywood Hills. As he followed the path, he chewed on the idea that "The Spirit" is the movie that will define him and his career to this point.

"This is your 'breakthrough chance,' but I feel like every role gives you something different, lessons and opportunities," Macht said. "When I look back the ones I really remember were the times I got the role in the room. When I auditioned for Steve Martin and he said, 'I want you to play Elvis,' or when I read for De Niro and he gave me a hug and said, 'I want you to be my guy.'"

Miller says Macht had no problem holding his own on the screen with the irrepressible Jackson, the sea of green-screen special effects or the film's eye-candy brigade of actresses. "He has the looks and the talent, and most of all he has this ability to make a connection with the audience. There's a realness to him and his performance. I knew right away that I had found my Spirit."

As a character, the Spirit has more history but far less traction in the popular memory than Spider-Man or even Wolverine. The character was created in the 1940s by Will Eisner (a beloved and influential icon in comic book circles) and ran as 16-page inserts in Sunday newspapers with a charming meld of the private-eye noir and Hollywood's screwball comedies.

Macht, like most people his age and younger, had never heard of the Spirit until this movie project came along. He also found it a major challenge to step into the throwback, Lew Archer-style dialogue for an anachronistic movie that blends the fedora era with cell phones and cloning. It's not that easy to say lines such as "I'm going to kill you all kinds of dead" for an audience that might smirk at the wrong times.

"I had to roll that voice over in my head again and again and find the way to say things like, 'This is my city,'" Macht said. "You say it as honest as you can. That's where it had to come from. You work out to get the physicality that's right for a guy who could take on the job of crime-fighting, but the trick is finding the gravel for the voice. As soon as you throw that hat on you say, 'All right, this is it, go with it, be honest.' "

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Bedtime Stories
Thurs thru Sat 1:20 4:05 7:25 9:45
Sun thru Wed 1:20 4:05 7:25
Thursday 1:20 4:05 7:25 9:45
Adam Sandler, Keri Russell
Comedy, Adventure • Rated PG 13
Synopsis
Hotel handyman Skeeter Bronson's life is changed forever when the bedtime stories he tells his niece and nephew start to mysteriously come true. When he tries to help his family by telling one outlandish tale after another, it's the kids' unexpected contributions that turn all of their lives upside down.

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button
Thurs thru Sat 1:00 4:00 7:00 10:00
Sun thru Wed 1:00 4:00 7:00
Thursday 1:00 4:00 7:00 10:00
Brad Pitt, Cate Blanchett
Drama, Romance • Rated PG 13
Synopsis
Benjamin Button is a man who is born in his eighties and ages backwards: a man, like any of us, who is unable to stop time. From New Orleans at the end of World War I in 1918, into the 21st century, on a journey as unusual as any man's life can be, this is the grand tale of a not so ordinary man and the people and places he discovers along the way, the loves he finds and loses, the joys of life and the sadness of death, and what lasts beyond time.

Marley and Me
Thurs thru Sat 1:25 4:30 7:15 9:55
Sun thru Wed 1:25 4:30 7:15
Thursday 1:25 4:30 7:15 9:55
Owen Wilson, Jennifer Aniston
Comedy, Drama • Rated PG 13

Valkyrie
Thurs thru Sat 1:30 4:25 7:20 9:50
Sun thru Wed 1:30 4:25 7:20
Thursday 1:30 4:25 7:20 9:50
Tom Cruise, Bill Nighy
Thriller, War, Historical • Rated PG 13

★ ★ ★

Yes Man
Thurs thru Sat 1:05 4:20 7:05 9:35
Sun thru Wed 1:05 4:20 7:05
Thursday 1:05 4:20 7:05 9:35
Jim Carrey, Bradley Cooper
Comedy • Rated PG 13
Synopsis
Carl Allen's life is going nowhere—the operative word being "no"—until he signs up for a self-help program based on one simple covenant: say yes to everything—and anything. Unleashing the power of "YES" begins to transform Carl's life in amazing an unexpected ways, getting him promoted at work and opening the door to a new romance.

The Tale of Despereaux
Thurs thru Sat 1:10 4:15 7:30 9:30
Sun thru Wed 1:10 4:15 7:30
Thursday 1:10 4:15 7:30 9:30
Sigourney Weaver, Dustin Hoffman
Animated, Chicldren • Rated G

Seven Pounds
Thurs thru Sat 1:15 4:10 7:10 9:40
Sun thru Wed 1:15 4:10 7:10
Thursday 1:15 4:10 7:10 9:40
Will Smith, Rosario Dawson
Drama, Romance • Rated PG 13

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Teacher's lessons inspire thanks from former student

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



DearAbby

DEAR ABBY: Please print this for teachers everywhere:

Dear Miss Regan: Wherever you are now, I hope you can read this. I was that curly-haired kid in your third- and fourth-grade class in Brooklyn many years ago. I remember your love of animals and books. At the end of each school day you used to read the Dr. Doolittle stories to us. In my home there was almost no reading, but because of your influence, I went to the library, checked out the Dr. Doolittle books and read them cover-to-cover.

I remember how, when kids misbehaved, you held mock trials in which student volunteers played the part of the judge, the lawyers, the jurors, etc. Because of it, I gained a deep respect for law and order not only in the classroom but also in the outside world.

You made us draw maps of New York City over and over. I appreciated knowing the geography of the city so well. And you taught the boys as well as the girls how to crochet. I never used that skill, but it was nice to have been exposed to it.

Now that I am a teacher, I often wonder if I make a difference in my students' lives. But when I do, I think back to your class and am reminded that, yes, the children do walk away with lifelong gifts. Thank you for all you did for me.

HOWARD IN BRIDGEWATER, N.J.

DEAR HOWARD: I am pleased to print your letter. I am often asked for gift suggestions for teachers. Your message illustrates that one of the most meaningful gifts a teacher can receive is a letter from a former student, recalling a memory or life lesson learned in his or her classroom. These letters are more precious than anything money could buy because the most meaningful thing we have in life is knowing that during the time we spent on this Earth we were able to make a difference.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I attend a number of women's events, and a pet peeve of mine is when one or more of the women immediately pull out pictures of their grandchildren, their children's weddings or their pets and proceed to show them to everyone.

I know these women are proud, but they should realize that not everyone wants to look at these photos. There are times when I itch to say something, but I'm afraid they would reply with something like, "Oh, you're just jealous because you don't have grandchildren."

One woman dominated the entire conversation at one luncheon. No one knew her daughter and son-in-law or their relatives, and I imagine they were looking at the pictures just to be polite, as was I. I resented her standing behind me while delivering her lengthy description of each one to the person sitting next to me.

What should I do when I find myself in this situation again—as I know I will?

BORED BY THE PICTURES, BIRMINGHAM, ALA.

DEAR BORED: It would not be rude to suddenly have an "urgent call of nature" and excuse yourself to go to the restroom. I'll bet if you do, others at the table will join you. And should you see a friend on the way back, it also isn't rude to stop and chat for a moment. When you get back to the table, raise another topic of conversation.

■ ■ ■ ■

TO MY CHRISTIAN READERS: A very Merry Christmas one and all!

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more attractive person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

Springsteen explains quick turnaround of new album

NEW YORK (AP)—Bruce Springsteen says he was energized to make a new album quickly after recording a song he calls a "love-in-the-time-of-Bush meditation."

In notes posted on his Web site Tuesday, Springsteen explains the creation of his new disc "Working on Dream" (due out Jan. 27)—which follows his last album, "Magic," by only 15 months—an unusually quick turnaround for him. It started with the song "What Love Can Do."

Springsteen says he usually doesn't write that quickly, but that the excitement from "Magic" left "more than enough fuel for the fire to keep going."

Springsteen will perform during halftime at the Super Bowl on Feb. 1 in Tampa, Fla. Springsteen recently was nominated for two Grammys for best solo rock vocal performance and best rock song, both for "Girls in Their Summer Clothes."

Homeland Security turns reality TV star



This photo released by ABC shows a scene from "Homeland Security USA". Every day the men and women of the Department of Homeland Security patrol more than 100,000 miles of America's borders. This territory includes airports, seaports, land borders, international mail centers, the open seas, mountains, deserts and even cyberspace. Now viewers will get an unprecedented look at the work of these men and women while they use the newest technology to safeguard our country and enforce our laws.

AP

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Ratings champion "American Idol" will face serious competition when it returns next month: the Department of Homeland Security.

"Homeland Security USA," an ABC reality series debuting Jan. 6, tracks the daily efforts of the federal workers responsible for safeguarding the nation's airports, borders, waters and anyplace else threats might arise.

While viewers see the mechanics of agencies including Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Transportation Security Administration, absent is discussion of such hot-button issues as post-Sept. 11 security programs or immigration policies. That's by design, said series executive producer Arnold Shapiro, whose credits include "Rescue 911" and "Big Brother."

"It doesn't have a political point of view," Shapiro said. "It's not meant to show the (department) higher-ups .... just the average men and women on the front lines protecting our country from various things illegal and dangerous."

"Homeland Security USA" has a week to win viewers before it has to face Fox's hit singing contest, back Jan. 13.

The ABC series, filmed with the department's cooperation, is a virtual travelogue in the first episode as it skips from border crossings at Blaine, Wash., and San Ysidro, Calif., to Los Angeles International Airport to a mail processing plant.

Turns out even mail has dramatic possibilities, as sharp-eyed officers pry open toys containing black-market prescription drugs and uncover an exotic and illicit food item: barbecued bats from Thailand.

The show mixes the offbeat and the serious, including drug smugglers, people trying to enter the country with doctored papers and a woman who's been shoved under a car seat in a painful, failed effort to slip into the country.

Not all goes the department's way in the 13 episodes. In one scene, guns are drawn against a man trying to drive across the U.S.-Mexico border with his family, terrifying his wife and young children, until agents discover it's a case of mistaken identity.

Shapiro says that he retained control over the show's creative content. The department prescreened episodes and could ask for deletion of elements that would have revealed law-enforcement strategies, infringed on personal rights or jeopardized pending legal cases.

The series is based on Australia's popular "Border Security," which was optioned by ABC. "Homeland Security USA" is intended as entertainment without a political point of view, said Vicki Dummer, ABC's executive in charge of alternative series.

The department saw the show "as a great opportunity to help the American public understand what their government does and what the Department of Homeland Security, the youngest department, does," said department spokesman Ed Fox.

But "Homeland Security USA" has provoked debate sight unseen. A Facebook page opposing the series drew more than 500 postings within its first few days. Many were negative, including denunciations of the show as government propaganda.

The page was created by Tina Shull, a graduate student in history at the University of California, Irvine, whose critical view of Homeland Security was shaped in part by the detention and deportation of her Albanian husband after he was refused political asylum.

"My biggest fear about the show is it's simplifying a very complex range of duties that DHS takes on. ... It's making light of a very serious, very controversial issue in our society today," said Shull. She wants ABC to reconsider airing it.

Shapiro is adamant in his defense of "Homeland Security USA."

"I don't see how actually and factually documenting something that happens before our eyes, and editing it in a factual way—in other words, not manipulatively, can be considered propaganda," he said.

Robert Mulligan, director of 'Mockingbird,' dies

Robert Mulligan, the Academy Award-nominated director of "To Kill a Mockingbird" who later helped launch the career of Reese Witherspoon, has died at 83.

Mulligan died early Saturday at his home in Lyme, Conn., after a battle with heart disease, his wife, Sandy, said Monday.

Mulligan was nominated for an Oscar for "Mockingbird," the adaptation of Harper Lee's best-selling novel, a Pulitzer Prize-winning look at a child's world shaken by the racism of a Southern town.

The 1962 film starred Gregory Peck, who won the best-actor Oscar for his portrayal of Atticus Finch, the small town lawyer who defends a black man falsely accused of rape.

The story unfolds largely from the point of view of Atticus' young daughter, Scout, memorably played by Mary Badham. Phillip Alford played his son, Jem.

The New York Times wrote that in the film's opening segment "achieves a bewitching indication of the excitement and thrill of being a child."

Mulligan was also known as the director of Witherspoon's first film, "The Man in the Moon." The 1991 family drama, Mulligan's last movie, brought Witherspoon notice as the younger of two teenage daughters grappling with her first love in 1950s Louisiana.

Mulligan cast Witherspoon, a Tennessee schoolgirl at the time, after seeing her during a 10-state casting search. She was 14, already getting modeling work in Nashville, when she tried out for what she thought would be a possible job as an extra in the film, she told the publication Nashville Business and Lifestyle in 1992.

"They were real nonchalant about how I was doing," she said. "They did say that I took direction really well, and that was pretty much it." She was mailed a copy of the script a month later and got the part. During filming, she recalled, Mulligan was "real set in his ways. He was more old-school."

Among Mulligan's other credits were "Fear Strikes Out," the 1957 drama starring Anthony Perkins as troubled ballplayer Jim Piersall; "Summer of '42," the 1971 wartime coming-of-age story starring Gary Grimes and Jennifer O'Neill; and the 1972 horror hit "The Other."

He also carved out a solid career as a TV director before moving over to film, working on such drama series as "The Philco Television Playhouse" and "The Alcoa Hour."

But "Mockingbird" would remain his most famous work. In 2003, an American Film Institute listing of the top heroes in film history ranked Peck's Atticus Finch as No. 1. ***(AP)***

Bret Baier replacing Hume on Fox evening newscast

NEW YORK (AP)—Fox News Channel has selected White House correspondent Bret Baier to replace Brit Hume as anchor of its weeknight 6 p.m. newscast.

Hume is cutting back to part-time work at Fox, and was anchoring his last newscast Tuesday. Baier will start his new job on Jan. 5.

Baier is familiar to viewers of the show as Hume's occasional substitute and from his work as Fox's top person in the White House. He said he plans "on continuing to maintain the prestige of the program in every way I know how."

January brings another big change to Fox in the early evening hours: Glenn Beck begins a new 5 p.m. program on Jan. 19.

Pastimes

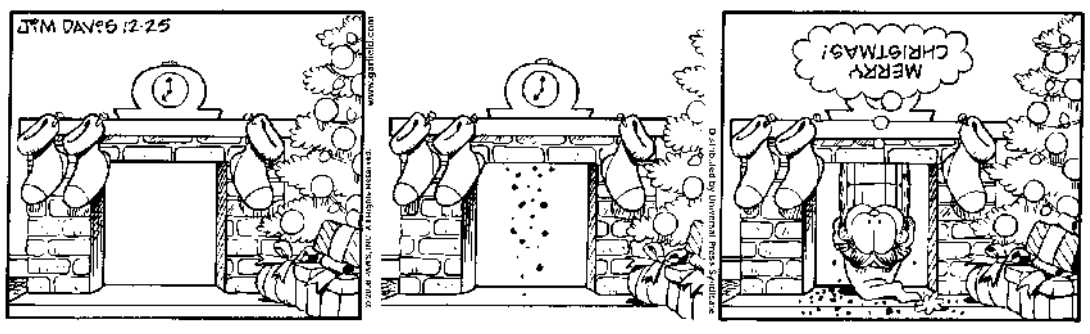
Calvin and Hobbes

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13 Re plans and such
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15 Part meant to be clutched
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18 St. Bernard's cargo
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21 Mickey's boss
24 London-er's last letter
25 The whole enchilada
26 Roulette bet
28 Monastery VIP
32 Harness part
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37 Oust
39 "That hurts!"
41 Eg. and Syr., once
42 Symbol of intrigue
44 Table linens
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56 Aware of
57 Pennsylvania port
58 Greek mountain
59 Without
60 For fear that
61 Plague

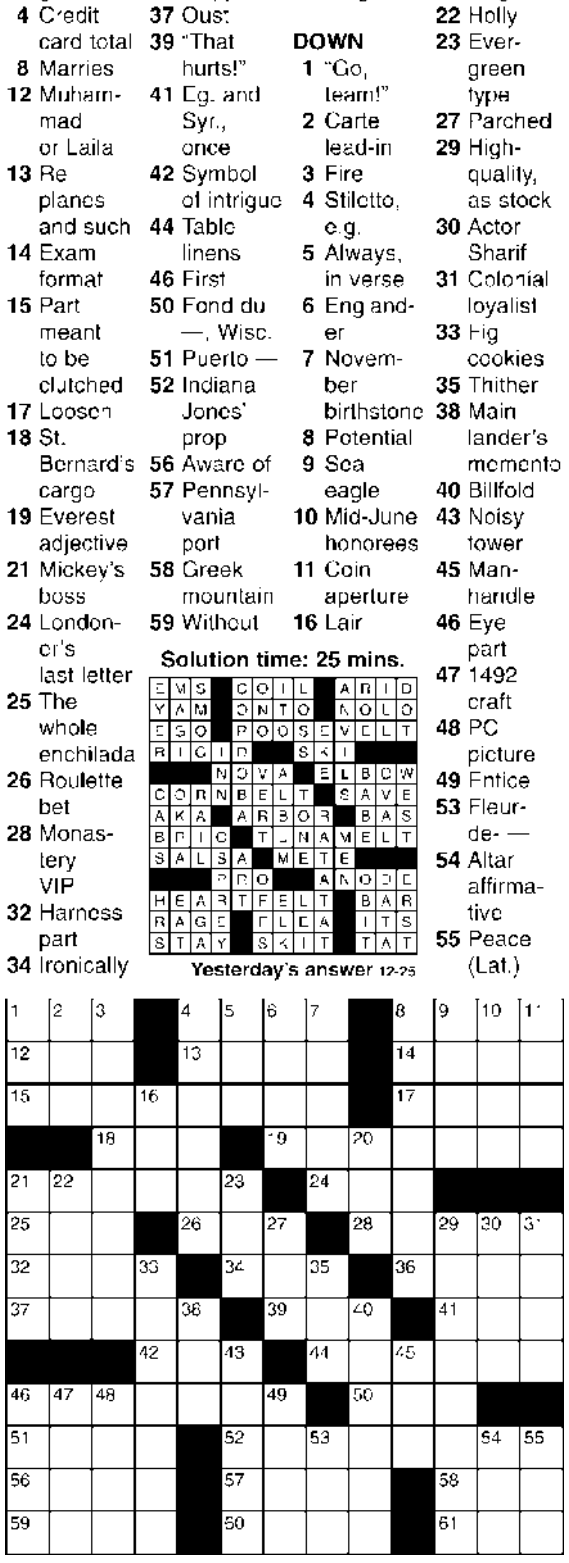
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6 Eng and-er
7 November birthstone
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10 Mid-June honorees
11 Coin aperture
16 Lair
20 Meadow
21 Challenge
22 Holly
23 Evergreen type
27 Parched
29 High-quality, as stock
30 Actor Sharif
31 Colonial loyalist
33 Fig cookies
35 Thither
38 Mainlander's memento
40 Billfold
43 Noisy tower
45 Man-handle
46 Eye part
47 1492 craft
48 PC picture
49 Entice
53 Fleur-de- —
54 Altar affirmative
55 Peace (Lat.)

Solution time: 25 mins.

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Yesterday's answer 12-25



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute. touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Klea Scott, 40; Annie Lennox, 54; Sissy Spacek, 59; Barbara Mandrell, 60

Happy Birthday: Don't let your emotions lead you down the wrong path. Stand your ground and hold on to what you've worked so hard to achieve. This is not the year to take risks or to let frivolous needs get in the way of your goals. Instead of trial-and-error, this is a year that must be laid out precisely. Your numbers are 4, 9, 11, 24, 28, 36, 44

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): You'll be busy running about and making sure everything is up to your standards. Back away from anyone who doesn't often agree with you. This is the time of year to get along and to avoid any discord. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): A change of scenery is what you need. Whether it means having a lot of people visit you or, even better, visiting friends and family, it will give you a renewed sense of who you are and where you are heading. Don't let a love relationship get you down. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): You may be uncertain about a lot of things, including some of your relationships. Listen instead of doing all the talking and you will get a whole new perspective. Enjoy what others have to offer. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Busy isn't the word but possibly frantic is. You've probably taken on too much, but that's OK, you will get through it. Family may be critical and sometimes difficult but, for now, concentrate on the positive. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Have fun with the youngsters in your family. Your high-spirited nature and entertaining ways will capture hearts. Don't neglect the one who is counting on you most. Put time aside for that special person. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Be confident if you want everyone around you to look up to you. Don't let emotions overrule what needs to be done. This is not the time to argue over senseless, little things. It may be time for a change. ✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): This can be a rather tense day if you let family get to you. Stick to the less serious members of your clan and you will avoid some hefty discussions about matters that will set you off. Love is on the rise, so have less talk and more affection. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Lighten up and enjoy the day rather than being critical. Emotional deception is apparent if you are unapproachable or too quick to judge. Hold on to your thoughts for now and you will get through the day with less frustration. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You will be emotional regarding some of the comments made and actions taken but you have to allow others to be who they are and make today free from judgment. Put important decisions on the backburner for now. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Be careful how you handle family and friends. It is likely that someone will ask you for financial help. Back away nicely, making suggestions but avoiding partnering or lending anyone something you don't feel right about. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Overspending to try to please someone is a bad idea. Make up for whatever you feel you should be doing by offering affection, good will and a helping hand. Your gestures will be a far greater gift. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): You may feel a little uneasy seeing some of your relatives, especially if you have unfinished business with any of them. Strive for good tidings, not a disagreement about something that really doesn't matter. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You think big and are imaginative, sensitive and willing to do whatever it takes to reach your goals. You are forceful and determined.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	3					6		
5								4
		8	4	7	6	9		
		5		6		4		
		7	1		9	5		
		4		3		8		
		2	6	8	5	3		
6								7
	4					9		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/25

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

1	9	5	8	7	4	2	6	3
6	2	8	3	5	1	9	7	4
4	3	7	2	9	6	5	8	1
7	8	6	4	1	2	3	5	9
3	5	1	9	6	8	4	2	7
2	4	9	7	3	5	8	1	6
9	1	3	5	2	7	6	4	8
8	6	2	1	4	3	7	9	5
5	7	4	6	8	9	1	3	2

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/25

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

FUEL SURCHARGES — Solution: 10 letters

Y	A	W	L	I	A	R	D	O	M	E	S	T	I	C
T	N	E	R	A	P	S	N	A	R	T	P	E	O	E
C	N	O	L	L	A	G	E	R	C	E	G	S	G	N
A	O	F	I	M	P	I	F	M	F	N	T	A	F	O
L	U	U	N	T	I	R	T	B	A	S	R	U	E	G
C	N	P	N	A	A	L	E	R	I	E	E	S	I	R
U	C	A	D	T	M	T	E	G	V	L	A	R	L	A
L	E	S	E	A	R	R	R	A	I	B	L	E	E	C
A	M	S	K	A	T	Y	F	O	G	O	V	F	R	O
T	E	T	I	C	K	E	T	P	P	E	N	U	E	M
E	N	N	H	G	U	R	I	R	L	S	I	N	G	P
X	T	I	I	E	A	R	I	A	E	S	N	D	G	A
T	O	O	K	V	T	C	T	S	E	E	F	A	I	N
R	L	P	E	A	E	A	I	N	D	U	S	T	R	Y
A	L	L	S	S	D	L	O	H	S	E	R	H	T	T

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Announcement, Average, Base, Bill, Calculate, Cargo, Company, Costs, Country, Cruise, Data, Domestic, Extra, Fees, Fuel, Gallon, Hikes, Implement, Industry, Level, Mileage, Permanent, Points, Prices, Railway, Range, Rate, Refund, Region, Relief, Save, Threshold, Ticket, Toll, Train, Transparent, Transportation, Travel, Trigger, Trip, Trucks, Update

Yesterday's Answer: Rooftops

WONDERWORD® offered by Universal Press Syndicate, for $5.95 each (US) (not currently available in Canada), payable to Universal Press Syndicate plus $3 postage for the first book order, $1 per for each additional book. Send to WONDERWORD, 1130 Wall St., Kansas City, MO 64141 (allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery). Offer valid in U.S. and Canada (void where prohibited).

CLASSIFIED ADS

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$25
• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

HOUSE FOR RENT
(Sunset APT)
1Bedroom w/ Living Room
24 hrs. water • Fully Furnished
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235-3004 - 285-1860

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COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (1-670) 664-3500/1 • Fax: (1-670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@saipan.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Opening date: December 26, 2008 Closing date: January 30, 2009

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) announces the following job vacancy for Saipan:

One (1) Comptroller

Detailed information on minimum qualifications and position description for the above position may be picked up along with the application form during regular working hours at the CPA's Administration Office (2nd Floor Arrival Building) or the Human Resources Office (2nd floor Departure Building) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or it may also be downloaded by visiting CPA's website at ***www.cpa.gov.mp***

All applications must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official transcripts, original copy of recent police record, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 26 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. Failure to provide any of the required documents may result in automatic disqualification. Selected applicant will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening. The deadline for submission of applications is no later than ***4:30 p.m., January 30, 2009.***

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

/s/ EFRAIN F. CAMACHO, P.E.
Executive Director

FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

Fina Sisu Apt., 2-BR, FF, AC, 24-hr pwr./water, security, laundry room, free Wi-Fi & ample parking. MIHA applicants accepted. Right behind NMC campus. Special rates for NMC faculty/students. Call 235-6527/8 or 285-1317 for info.

WANTED TO LEASE

Looking for property with nice oceanview to lease, preparably direct from land owner. Please contact 483-9984

Ginza Couture Naoco
Vacancy: Wedding Coordinator
Local/IR Only
Japanese Speaking Prefer
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Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

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"Investing In The CNMI's Future"
PMB 184 Box 10000, Del-Sol Bldg., Breach Road, Garapan, Saipan, MP 96950
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Come and see our facilities first-hand and you will agree that, in this global economic conditions, RETSA HORIZON APARTMENTS truly provides you "Your Best Home Away From Home"

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* Perimeter fencing
* 5- & 10-yr renewable lease option
* Split-type air conditioning system
* Approximately 20,064 sq. ft.
* Rooftop covered BBQ or party facility
* Responsible inquiries only
* Lease price is negotiable
* ADA Compliant

Our facility is adjacent to the former Immigration Detention compound in As Lito Road just before you reach Saipan International Airport.



Commonwealth 0f the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Secretary of Public Works

2nd Floor Joeten Commercial Building, Gualo Rai
Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION FOR BIDS
DPW09-IFB-003

PAVEMENT MARKING IN PRECINCT III-CHALAN MONSIGNOR GUERRERO AND CHALAN PALE ARNOLD INTERSECTION, SAIPAN

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Timothy P. Villagomez, through the Department of Public Works (DPW) are soliciting sealed bids for the Pavement Marking in Precinct ID-Chalan Monsignor Guerrero and Chalan Pale Arnold Intersection, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

The project package will be available on or after December 19, 2008 at DPW Technical Services Division, 2nd Floor-Joeten Commercial Building, Oleai Center, Saipan. A non-refundable payment to one Hundred Dollars **(US$100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division. All interested bidders are also required to include Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC can be obtained at the Department of Commerce/Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, dated May 24, 2001. Bidding procuredures shall be in compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations. Preference is available to US Citizens or Permanent Residents as per Public law 15-95 and as further **Amended by Public Law 15-118** and must be submitted with the BID or PROPOSAL if preference is claimed.

There will be a Pre-bid Conference for this project on January 05, 2009, 9:00 a.m. local time at the project site located at Intersection of Chalan Monsignor Guerrero and Chalan Pale Arnold, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on January 09, 2009 to **Mr. Joseph M. Inos Jr., Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd floor-Joeten Commercial Building, Oleai Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547.

Sealed bids must be marked **"DPW09-IFB-003"**. For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than 10:00 a.m. local time January 13, 2009. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional Seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 10:00 a.m. local time January 13, 2009, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than January 13, 2009, and must be received no later than February 22, 2009. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 10:00 a.m. local time, January 27, 2009, However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at 10:00 a.m. local time, on January 16, 2009.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars **($25,000.00)** a bid security of fifteen (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. Bid security may be Certified Check, Cashier's Check or Bid Bond. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations Section 3-301. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than $25,000.00. The surety company providing the Performance and payment bonds must authorized to conduct business in CNMI and possess unencumbered assets equal to the penal amount of each bond.

Performance time for completion of this project is Thirty **(30)** calendar days upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. Liquidated damages will be assessed at one hundred dollars **(US$100.00)** per working days for delays beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not effect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

/s/ DIEGO B. SONGSONG
Secretary of Public Works

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director, Procurement & Supply

Commonwealth 0f the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Secretary of Public Works

2nd Floor Joeten Commercial Building, Gualo Rai
Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION FOR BIDS
DPW09-IFB-004

REPAIR AND RENOVATION OF PAKPAK BEACH PARK PAVILIONS SAN ANTONIO, SAIPAN

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Timothy P. Villagomez, through the Department of Public Works (DPW) are soliciting sealed bids for the Repair and Renovation of Pakpak Beach Park Pavilions San Antonio, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

The project package will be available on or after December 19, 2008 at DPW Technical Services Division, 2nd Floor-Joeten Commercial Building, Oleai Center, Saipan. A non-refundable payment to one Hundred Dollars **(US$I00.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division. All interested bidders are also required to include Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC can be obtained at the Department of Commerce/Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, dated May 24, 2001. Bidding procuredures shall be in compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations. Preference is available to US Citizens or Permanent Residents as per Public Law 15-95 and as further Amended by Public Law 15-118 and must be submitted with the BID or PROPOSAL if preference is claimed.

There will be a Pre-bid Conference for this project on January 06, 2009, I :00 p.m. local time at the project site located at Pakpak Beach Park in San Antonio, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on January 09, 2009 **to Mr. Joseph M. Inos Jr., Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd floor-Joeten Commercial Building Oleai Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547.

Sealed bids must be marked **"DPW09-IFB-004"**. For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than 1:00 p.m. local time January 14, 2009. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional Seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 1:00 p.m. local time January 14, 2009, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than January 14, 2009, and must be received no later than January 23, 2009. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 1 :00 p.m. local time, January 28, 2009, However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at 1:00 p.m. local time, on January 19, 2009.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars **($25,000.00)** a bid security of fifteen (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. Bid security may be Certified Check, Cashier's Check or Bid Bond. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive. bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations Section 3-301. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than $25,000.00. The surety company providing the Performance and payment bonds must authorized to conduct business in CNMI and possess unencumbered assets equal to the penal amount of each bond.

Performance time for completion of this project is Sixty **(60)** calendar days upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. Liquidated damages will be assessed at one hundred dollars **(US$100.00)** per working days for delays beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not effect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

/s/ DIEGO B. SONGSONG
Secretary of Public Works

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director, Procurement & Supply

Commonwealth 0f the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Secretary of Public Works

2nd Floor Joeten Commercial Building, Gualo Rai
Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION FOR BIDS
DPW09-IFB-005

SUPPLY, DELIVERY, AND INSTALLATION OF COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CENTER PERIMETER (SECURITY) FENCE AND GUARD BOOTHS

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Timothy P. Villagomez, through the Department of Public Works (DPW) are soliciting sealed bids for the Supply, Delivery, and Installation of Commonwealth Health Center Perimeter (Security) Fence and Guard Booths, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands **(CNMI)**.

The project package will be available on or after December 19, 2008 at DPW Technical Services Division, 2nd Floor-Joeten Commercial Building, Oleai Center, Saipan. A non-refundable payment of One Hundred Dollars **(US$100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division. All interested bidders are also required to include Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC can be obtained at the Department of Commerce/Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill. .

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations NMIAC 70-30.3. Local Preference is not available per grant conditions Homeland Security Grant.

There will be a Pre-bid Conference for this project on January 7, 2009, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Commonwealth Health Center Conference Room. Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on January 16, 2009 to **Mr. Joseph M. Inos, Jr., Director** of Technical Services Division, DPW 2nd Floor Joeten Commercial Building, Oleai Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547.

Sealed bids must be marked **"DPW09-IFB-005"**. For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than 10:00 a.m. local time January 22, 2009. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional Seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 10:00 a.m. local time January 22, 2009, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than January 22, 2009, and must be received no later than February 2, 2009. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 10:00 a.m. local time, February 5, 2009, However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at 10:00 a.m. local time, on January 27, 2009.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars **($25,000.00)** a bid security of fifteen (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. This security may be Certified Check, Cashier's Check or Bid Bond. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660".

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations NMIAC Section 70-3-245. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price. The surety company providing the Performance and payment bonds must be authorized to conduct business in CNMI. The successful bidder must submit an ICC with such bonds.

Performance time for completion of this project is one hundred Twenty (120) calendar days upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. Liquidated damages will be assessed at one hundred dollars (US$l00.00) per working day for delays beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not effect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

/s/ DIEGO B. SONGSONG
Secretary of Public Works

/s/ PATRICK J. TENORIO
Special Assistant, Homeland Security

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director, Procurement & Supply

Teixeira reportedly agrees to $180M Yankees deal

NEW YORK (AP)—Keeping up an unprecedented spending spree, the New York Yankees added Mark Teixeira to their collection of pricey free agents when they reached a preliminary agreement on a $180 million, eight-year contract with the first baseman.

Two people familiar with the negotiations disclosed Tuesday's agreement, which is subject to a physical. They spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the deal was not yet final.

With Teixeira's deal, the Yankees have lavished $423.5 million on three new players, a figure dwarfing the economic might of the other 29 clubs. Just last Thursday, the Yankees completed agreements with two prized pitchers, giving CC Sabathia a $161 million, seven-year contract and A.J. Burnett an $82.5 million, five-year deal.

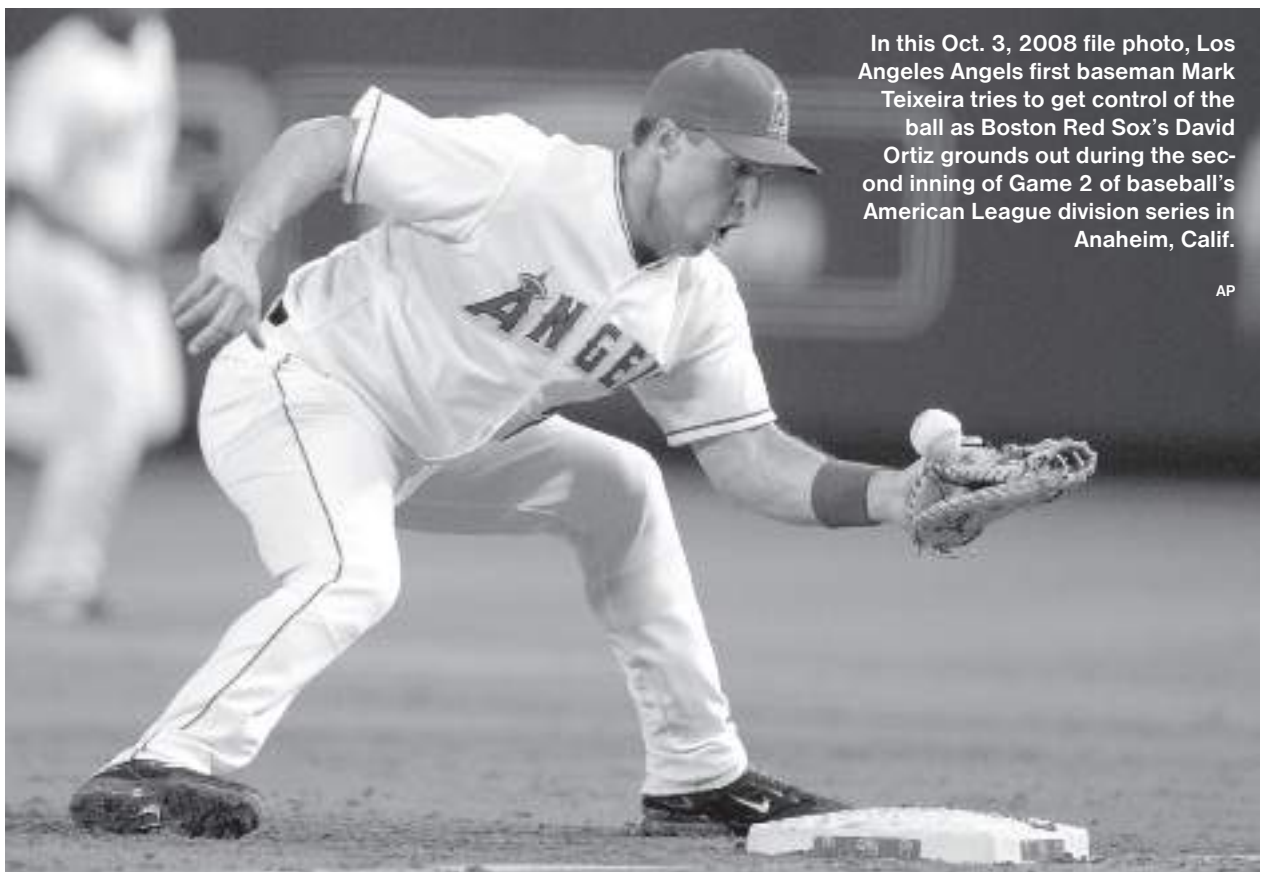
"They have the revenue sources that most don't have, and they have a lot of money coming off the books this season," said Los Angeles Angels general manager Tony Reagins, who had hoped to retain Teixeira. "So if they're willing and able to spend, I'm pretty sure they've made some good investments."

As is their custom, the Yankees refused to publicly acknowledge the agreement because it had not yet been finalized. General manager Brian Cashman met with Teixeira and his agent, Scott Boras, in the Washington area on Dec. 4 and impressed the player with models of the new Yankee Stadium, according to one of the people familiar with the talks.

Early Tuesday, after midnight New York time, Cashman received a telephone call from Boras stating that Teixeira's preference was to play for the Yankees, the person said. While the Boston Red Sox had also pursued Teixeira, offering an eight-year deal worth about $170 million, New York is closer to the player's family in Maryland.

Boras came off his demand for a 10-year contract later in the day, the person said, and the deal was agreed to.

The Baltimore Orioles and Washington Nationals also made big offers to Teixeira, but they appear to have little chance of winning in the next few years. The Angels, who obtained Teixeira from Atlanta on July 29, pulled



In this Oct. 3, 2008 file photo, Los Angeles Angels first baseman Mark Teixeira tries to get control of the ball as Boston Red Sox's David Ortiz grounds out during the second inning of Game 2 of baseball's American League division series in Anaheim, Calif.

AP

their eight-year offer last weekend.

In the end, the Yankees were helped by geography and the likelihood they will contend for the postseason each year.

"You just want to wish the player well and you hope he made the right choice for him and his family," Reagins said. "At the end of the day, I think he wound up where he wanted to be."

Preparing to move into their $1.3 billion ballpark, the Yankees will hold the four largest contracts in baseball as they try to win the World Series for the first time since 2000. Third baseman Alex Rodriguez has the sport's highest deal at $275 million over 10 years, and shortstop Derek Jeter is second at $189 million over 10 years.

Teixeira's agreement came just one day after the Yankees received a $26.9 million luxury tax bill for 2008, when their streak of 13 consecutive playoff appearances ended. But with the revenue from their new stadium, where tickets are priced at up to $2,500 per game, their appetite for free agents wasn't diminished.

The 28-year-old Teixeira is the type of hitter the Yankees hope will revive an offense that dropped from a major league-leading 968 runs in 2007 to 789 last season. The switch-hitter batted a combined .308 with 33 homers and 121 RBIs for the Braves and Angels. He has reached 30 homers and 105 RBIs in five consecutive seasons.

Teixeira gets a $5 million signing bonus, $20 million in each of the first two seasons, and $22.5 million in each of the final six years. He has a full no-trade clause.

Red Sox executives met with Teixeira and Boras in the Dallas area last week. After Teixeira decided on the Yankees, Boston president Larry Lucchino said succinctly: "No comment at this time."

Boras informed Orioles president of baseball operations Andy MacPhail on Tuesday that Teixeira would sign elsewhere.

"We would have loved to have had the player, who appealed to us because of the special circumstances of where he's from and where we are. We diverted from our plan to try to get him," MacPhail said. "But at the end of the day, it was just too much to pay for one player. It would handicap our ability to go forward."

Nationals general manager Jim Bowden said his team's owners "demonstrated their commitment to win, when they stepped up in negotiations ... at the highest level."

"We are disappointed we weren't able to sign him," Bowden wrote in an e-mail to the AP, "and will now turn our attention to several other opportunities to improve our major league club this offseason."

Teixeira should help fill a void in the Yankees lineup created by the departures of first baseman Jason Giambi and right fielder Bobby Abreu, who became free agents. It also creates a log-jam for New York, which acquired first baseman Nick Swisher last month in a trade with the Chicago White Sox.

Although Swisher also can play the outfield, the Yankees have a multitude of options there, including Johnny Damon, Hideki Matsui, Melky Cabrera, Brett Gardner and Xavier Nady. Matsui currently is likely to be the designated hitter much of the time.

For all of Teixeira's positives, he gives the Yankees another slow-footed player who in 2010 will become the team's third starting infielder in his 30s. But the 2005 All-Star is a two-time Gold Glove winner who should improve New York's defense.

His agreement raises the Yankees' commitment for next year to approximately $185 million for 16 players on the 40-man roster. New York has three players eligible for arbitration: Nady, Cabrera and reliever Brian Bruney.

After Teixeira's agreement, the Yankees must reassess whether they want to re-sign pitcher Andy Pettitte, who was given an offer of about $10 million for one year but thus far hasn't accepted it.

McNamee preserves right to sue Clemens in New York

NEW YORK (AP)—Roger Clemens' former personal trainer filed paperwork preserving the right to sue the seven-time Cy Young Award winner in New York.

Brian McNamee, who told federal investigators that Clemens used performance-enhancing drugs, contends the pitcher defamed him after McNamee spoke to investigators for former Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell. The summons, filed in Queens Supreme Court last week, preserves McNamee's right to sue, Richard Emery, a lawyer for McNamee, said Tuesday.

Clemens filed his own defamation suit against McNamee in January after the trainer said in the Mitchell Report that he regularly injected Clemens with steroids and human growth hormone. Clemens later told a congressional committee under oath he had never taken steroids.

In the federal case in Texas, McNamee's attorneys say the trainer was forced to talk to investigators under threat of prosecution, rendering him immune from any defamation lawsuit. A federal prosecutor backed McNamee's claim, but a judge has yet to rule on his request to toss the case.

Giants on verge of 2 1,000-yard running backs

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP)—In the history of the NFL, three teams have had two running backs rush for 1,000 yards in the same season.

Larry Csonka and Mercury Morris did it for the undefeated Miami Dolphins in 1972. Franco Harris and Rocky Bleier each hit the K-mark for the Pittsburgh Steelers in 1976, and Earnest Byner and Kevin Mack each ran for 1,000 yards for Cleveland in 1985.

The New York Giants are on the verge of joining the club heading into the regular-season finale against the Minnesota Vikings with Brandon Jacobs and Derrick Ward—two players who will be free agents at the end of the season.

Jacobs, who has battled a sore left knee most of the season, already has 1,089 yards. Ward is 52 from reaching 1,000 yards after gaining a career-best 215 yards in Sunday night's 34-28 overtime victory over the Carolina Panthers.

"It would mean a lot to us," Jacobs said Tuesday before the Giants held a jog-through workout. "Derrick works hard and he deserves it. He has been under the radar a lot, so if he can get this done and get these 52 yards and make that happen I'd be very, very, very happy. To be honest with you, that is a very special thing to share with someone like him and as close as we are."

The Atlanta Falcons also had a pair of 1,000-yard rushers in 2006 with halfback Warrick Dunn and quarterback Michael Vick.

Jacobs went over the 1,000-yard mark on Dec. 7 against the Eagles, a game in which he aggravated his knee injury and had to leave. He missed the following week against Dallas and returned this past weekend, rushing for 87 yards and three touchdowns to help the Giants wrap up the No. 1 seed in the NFC.

Jacobs, who also rushed for 1,000 yards last season, said he didn't think Ward had a chance for 1,000 after Dallas limited him to 64 yards on Dec. 14. Ward then had that career day against Carolina, averaging 14.3 yards on his 15 carries.

"I want him to get it. I really do," Jacobs said. "I want him to get out there and run as hard as he can to get those 52 yards. Do whatever it takes to get it. He has a tough defense ahead of him, ahead of us, this weekend in Minnesota, so it's going to be great challenge for us both."

The Giants can make it easy for Ward. They could decide to give Jacobs an extra week off to rest his knee and give Ward the majority of carries.

Don't expect that.

Coach Tom Coughlin plans on playing to win. So if Jacobs is given the OK by the doctors, he'll be in the lineup.

"Whatever they decide to do is up to them," said Jacobs, whose pounding style usually sets up things for the quicker Ward later in the game. "I'm here, I feel good and whatever coach goes with, I'll be ready for."

Ward loves working with Jacobs.

"You have Brandon softening up the defense for me and then I will get in and do what I do and we will rotate it back and forth and it will leave defenses off-balance," he said. "They won't know what to defend, so it works out well for me."

Jacobs and Ward had a long talk about the subject Monday night, spending 25 minutes on the telephone.

"And we are not phone guys at all, so I just talked to him and told him to work hard and continue to do whatever it is he is doing," Jacobs said. "It's going to be hard, but it's not something that he can't get done. It's very, very, very possible for him to get it done, so like I said, I'll be there the whole way with him standing behind him."

Ward, who was named the NFC offensive player of the week on Tuesday, gave much of the credit to the offensive line.

"I think it would mean more to the offensive line that they blocked for two 1,000-yard rushers than for me," Ward said after practice Tuesday. "Granted, I would love to have 1,000 yards rushing in the NFL, but I think it would be more of a celebration for my offensive linemen."

Whether both will be in the same locker room next season remains to be seen. It will be hard for the Giants to keep two 1,000-yard rushers under contract.

"That's definitely going to hurt," Jacobs said. "I talked to him about that as well, and every time over the past two years I've been asking him what kind of money he is looking for, and it's going up every day. So, it's funny and I laugh at him every time he tells me.

"He deserves it. He works hard and he does just as much as I do. ... It's going to be tough as an organization having to make a decision on us, but it's going to be tough to part if that's what we have to do."

Celtics win 19th straight, beat Philly

BOSTON (AP)—The Boston Celtics set a franchise record with their 19th consecutive victory, getting 18 points apiece from Kevin Garnett and Rajon Rondo to beat the Philadelphia 76ers 110-91 on Tuesday night.

Kendrick Perkins had eight points and 11 rebounds, and Ray Allen scored 16 as the Celtics starters watched from the bench while reserves Leon Powe and Eddie House helped expand the lead in the fourth quarter. The crowd began chanting "Beat L.A!" with 5:27 left in the fourth, anticipating the Christmas Day NBA finals rematch against the Lakers.

The Celtics improved to 27-2—the best start for a two-loss team in NBA history. And the 19-game winning streak broke the Celtics record set by the original Big Three in 1981-82.

Cavaliers 99, Rockets 90

At Cleveland, LeBron James scored 27 points—18 in the second half— and Mo Williams added 23 as Cleveland remained the NBA's only undefeated team at home with a win over Houston.

Daniel Gibson made two big 3-pointers in the fourth quarter for the Cavaliers, who improved to 23-2 in their last 25 games and 14-0 at home. They did it against the Western Conference's best road team—Houston had won 11 straight road games against Eastern Conference teams dating to last season.

James punctuated Cleveland's 14th straight win at Quicken Loans Arena—and a heated game—by pinning Yao Ming's layup attempt to the backboard in the final minute. James sneaked up behind the unsuspecting 7-foot-6 center and slammed his shot to the glass before screaming in the Chinese star's direction.

Lakers 100, Hornets 87

At New Orleans, Kobe Bryant scored 26 points, Pau Gasol added 20 and Los Angeles beat New Orleans in a performance that was more dominant than the final score indicated.

Using swarming defense to bottle up Chris Paul for much of the game, the Lakers stormed to a 19-point halftime lead and led by 20 after Bryant's jumper over James Posey early in the fourth quarter.

After stumbling through the beginning of their four-game road trip, the Lakers' dominance of the Hornets should serve as a warning to the defending champion Boston Celtics, who visit Los Angeles (23-5) for a much-anticipated Christmas Day contest.

Pistons 104, Bulls 98

At Auburn Hills, Mich., Rodney Stuckey scored 40 points, topping his previous career high by 13, and Detroit overcame an injury to Allen Iverson in a victory over Chicago.

Stuckey helped the Pistons end a two-game skid and improve to 11-11 since Iverson joined the team. The star guard managed only five points in this one, however, sitting out most of the second half with a groin strain. He shot 0-for-7 from the field and made five of six free throws.

Tayshaun Prince had 14 points and 11 rebounds for Detroit. Richard Hamilton scored 14, while Antonio McDyess added 10 points and 11 rebounds off the bench.

Nets 108, Pacers 107

At Indianapolis, Devin Harris' jumper from the top of the key as time expired gave New Jersey a victory over Indiana.

The Pacers had just taken the lead on a jumper from the free-throw line by Danny Granger with 10 seconds to play.

Harris finished with 29 points and 11 assists as New Jersey snapped a two-game losing streak. Vince Carter led the Nets with 38 points and eight rebounds.

Granger led the Pacers with 26 points in his first game back after missing two games with a viral infection. Brandon Rush scored a career-high 22 points, and Jeff Foster added 12 points and 14 rebounds.

Hawks 99, Thunder 88

At Atlanta, Joe Johnson had his second career triple-double, and Marvin Williams scored 21 points in Atlanta's victory over Oklahoma City.

Johnson had 20 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists. His follow shot with 32 seconds left before halftime made it 44-43 and gave Atlanta the lead for good.

Kevin Durant scored 28 points for the Thunder, who have lost two straight and 10 of 11.

Bobcats 80, Wizards 72

At Charlotte, N.C., Emeka Okafor had 29 points and 18 rebounds, and Charlotte pulled away in the fourth quarter to send reeling Washington to the worst start in franchise history.

Caron Butler's 31 points weren't enough for the woeful Wizards, who dropped to 4-22, the worst record after 26 games in the team's 48-year history.

Shooting just 32 percent and dominated inside, the Wizards faded late in their seventh straight loss and spoiled coach Ed Tapscott's return to Charlotte, where he was the expansion Bobcats' team president for three years.

Heat 96, Warriors 88

At Miami, Dwyane Wade had 32 points, eight rebounds and eight assists, Daequan Cook scored 15 of his 20 points to spark a second-quarter comeback, and Miami matched last season's win total by beating injury-depleted Golden State.

Udonis Haslem scored 16 points and Shawn Marion finished with a Heat season-high 16 rebounds as Miami reached the 15-win mark in 27 games—55 fewer than it needed to get there last season as the NBA's worst team.

C.J. Watson scored 18 points for Golden State, which has lost 16 of 19. The Warriors were without Heat nemesis Jamal Crawford, ruled out shortly before tip-off with a strained left groin.

Bucks 94, Jazz 86

At Milawukee, Michael Redd scored 27 points and Milwaukee won its fifth straight at home by beating short-handed Utah.

The Bucks also won for the fifth time in six games overall and snapped an eight-game losing streak against Utah. The Jazz finished 2-3 on their five-game road trip.

Luke Ridnour had 11 points, 11 assists and six steals for Milwaukee.

Andrei Kirilenko scored a season-high 22 off the bench for Utah. Deron Williams added 17 points, eight assists and eight rebounds, but had seven of Utah's 24 turnovers.

Mavericks 100, Grizzlies 82

At Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki scored 21 points, Jason Terry added 17 and Dallas stretched its winning streak against Memphis to 13 games.

Josh Howard added 14 points, and Erick Dampier contributed 13 points and nine rebounds for the Mavericks, who have won 14 of 18.

Hakim Warrick had 17 points, and Rudy Gay added 16 points and nine rebounds for the Grizzlies. Memphis pulled to 89-80 with 3:40 left, but Nowitzki answered with a three-point play.

Spurs 99, Timberwolves 93

At San Antonio, Tony Parker scored 36 points on 13-of-17 shooting and San Antonio handed Minnesota its 13th consecutive loss.

The Timberwolves (4-23) trailed by 16 heading into the fourth quarter and cut it to three with just less than three minutes left before the Spurs put it away.

Tim Duncan added 19 points and 12 rebounds for the Spurs (18-10), who have won nine of 11 heading into a Christmas Day matchup in Phoenix.

Trail Blazers 101, Nuggets 92

At Portland, Ore., LaMarcus Aldridge scored 22 points, Brandon Roy added 19 and Portland beat Denver to tie the Nuggets atop the Northwest Division.

Joel Przybilla had 19 rebounds and 10 points, going 4-of-4 on free throws in the final 2:40 for the Trail Blazers (18-11) in the second game of a home-and-home series.

Linas Kleiza had 20 points, including five 3-pointers, for the Nuggets, who lost three in a row before beating Portland 97-89 on Monday night in Denver. Nene had 17 points and 13 rebounds, and Chauncey Billups added 17 points on 4-of-12 shooting.



Oleai enhances CNMI chances to host big events

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The grandstand constructed on the south side of the Oleai Sports Complex track and field facility will add weight to CNMI's capability to host big tournaments.

"If we are presented the opportunity to host regional tournaments, such as the Oceania championships, it's good to know that we have a new facility that will complement the Oleai Complex," Northern Marianas Athletics president Kurt Barnes said.

Barnes is among the officials of various sports federations and government agencies who attended the inauguration of the grandstand last week.

Besides the grandstand, which costs $127,450 to build, Northern Marianas Housing Corp, through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development also constructed pathways in the complex. The other project costs $47,800.

"The grandstand gives the track and field facility an added value and this will gives us an edge over other island-nations when it comes to bidding for hosting rights of an event," Barnes said.

The NMA president is proud to say that the Oleai track and field facility is among the best facilities in the region thus earning the hosting rights for the 2008 Oceania Championships and the Oceania Grand Prix, which were held in June.

"Fiji outside Australia and New Zealand has the best track and field facility in the region. We have the second best" Barnes said.

When the CNMI hosted the two Oceania events, construction of the grandstand was not yet done, but still Oceania Athletics Association executive director Yvonne Mullins called the 2008 Oceania Championships as the "best ever" area championships.

Mullins said she hopes they will return here for other regional championships.

In the past three years, the Oleai Sports Complex hosted two athletics events—the athletic competition in the 2006 Micronesian Games and the 2005 Micronesian Regional Championships.

In 2007, the complex also hosted the historic soccer game between the CNMI and Guam. It was the CNMI's first international game and the event was sanctioned by the East Asian Football Federation.

Local tournaments, which hold the traditional parade of teams, are also using the track and field facility. Next year audience of these events will no longer stand on the sidelines of the track and bring their own chairs, as they just have to be in the bleachers and relax while watching the action unfolds.

Besides providing seats to spectators, Barnes said the grandstand is doubling as training/workout facility for athletes.

"I see athletes running up and down the bleachers, sweating and getting stronger legs," he said.

Little League meeting Saturday

Saipan Little League Baseball president Mike Borja is calling on all coaches and managers of teams participating in the 2009 season of the SLLB to attend a mandatory meeting this Saturday at the conference room of the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The meeting is set for 9am with SLLB officials and representatives of each team expected to discuss the final details about the preparations for next year's SLLB competitions.

Also, team managers and coaches are asked to submit at the meeting the league's requirements, such as copy of rosters and waiver forms

The 2008 season of SLLB will start early to accommodate additional teams and to give Saipan Little Leaguers more time to prepare for the district and regional tournaments.

Instead of the usual opening in February, SLLB is eyeing to kick off the 2009 season on Jan. 10.

The SaipanCell Patriots are the defending champions in the centerpiece Majors and will aim for their fourth title in a row. Three other teams will attempt to defend their titles, namely the Kagman Lion Hearts (Junior League), Jets (Senior League), and Tanapag Falcons (Big League).

Borja said if they start the league on January as set, they are hoping to end the season mid-May and proceed with the CNMI District Tournament, which Saipan will be hosting in June.

After the district meet, which will feature the All-Star teams from Saipan, Tinian, and hopefully Rota, the CNMI bets will go to Hong Kong for the Junior, Senior, and Big League divisions of the 2009 Asia Pacific Regional Tournament late June. Indonesia will host the Majors qualifier.

Teams that will win in the regional meet will compete in the World Series.

Last year, Saipan swept the district meet, but only the Big League All-Stars competed in the World Series in Easley, South Carolina and came home winless in the tournament.

For more information on SLLB, contact Borja at 322-0340 or 285-1980. ***(Roselyn B. Monroyo)***

CNMI

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ing experience," the 13-year-old netter added.

Minor teamed up with Fiji Tarani Kamoe in winning the girls' 14-and-under doubles in the 2008 Coca-Cola Waikato Junior Open in Hamilton East and in the Poverty Bay East Coast Ray White Junior Championship and the girls' 16-and-under doubles plum in the 2008 Auckland Christmas Tournament at the Scarbro Tennis Centre in Nicholson Park, Mt. Eden, Auckland.

She placed second in the 14-and-under singles in Poverty Bay losing to Kamoe and in the 14-and-under singles in Auckland bowing to 5-foot-7 Louise Oxnevad of Queensland.

Miller also went home with a runnerup medal, as he and partner Robin Morove finished second in Poverty Bay. Miller was also a runner-up in the boys' 14-and-under singles consolation draw.

The 13-year-old Miller and Jones are first-timers in New Zealand with the latter failing to get a medal, but won eight matches in three tournaments, and held his ground against Australia and New Zealand players.

"Those players can hit five times as harder as our players do here and they are taller and faster. It was really great playing against them, as you get to see what do you need to work out on your game to get to their level or past them," said Jones, who was kind of nervous in his first game in Waikato.

"It was a new experience. We traveled for long hours and play right away after only a few minutes of rest. I was kind of slow in the first few matches, but when I get the feeling of the game, I started to settle down," he added.

CUKI

From Page 32

Big Hit" Fitial defeat Spike 22 Guam's Reuben "The Booben" Quinata in the main event.

The semi main event, meanwhile, had Myron "The Natural" San Nicolas of Marianas Elite get the better of Team Predator's "Brutal" Bryson Sablan.

Tara "The Tarantula" Namauleg, for her part, outpointed Jenipy "So-High La" Sambile in the islands' first ever MMA female fight.

28 TEAMS

From Page 32

will be fielding more than one team in the tournament.

"This time of the year is the time to have fun. We want a lot of players to enjoy the tournament," said San Nicolas, who will also have a girls team competing in the holiday hoops.

San Nicolas' Lady Ayuyus were this year's champions in the MISO junior varsity caging and some of his players are in Kagman's team, while others are playing for other squads.

"It doesn't matter which team you played for. What matter is you enjoy the game and spend time with your friends through this tournament," he added.

Female students of MHS are also joining the Christmas caging with CNMI Junior National Team members Lia Rangamar and Jacque Wonenberg splitting up and forming their own teams.

Besides the 18-and-under division, this weekend's tournament will also hold competitions in the 14-and-under age group.

Tournament director Gabriel White in an email to *Saipan Tribune* said the boys' 14-and-under division has 10 teams. The list include the Rollers A and B, Lil' Sonics, G-Stars, Sixers I and II, Hopwood, Hilitai, LMA, and ChaCha Oceaniaview Junior High School.

Twelve teams will be competing for the boys' 18-and-under crown: Rollers A, B, and C; Manta Rays; Sonics; Junior Sonics; G-Stars; Ayuyus; Runnin' Rebels; Ol'Aces; Sixers; and the ACS Torchbears.

The girls' 18-and-under division will feature two teams from MHS, the Lady Ayuyus, and the Lady Knights. Only two squads will be playing in the girls' 14-and-under division—Hopwood and ChaCha Oceanview.

Holiday Hoops, which is being supported by the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, BANMI, Division of Youth Services, Saipan Mayor's Office, and Division of Sports and Recreation will run from Dec. 27 to Jan. 3.

Last year's Christmas caging had the G-Stars downing the Sonics in the finals, 62-60.

In the battle for third place, the San Antonio Sixers notched a 92-85 win over the visiting Team Tinian.

Tinian is skipping this year's Christmas caging due to funding problems.

RESOLUTION

From Page 32

sidered an alcoholic. Hmmm.

I did not go on a diet per se but stopped pigging out like I used to do so often, especially on Sundays and at barbecues.

It took a while but I realized that my body is like a car engine with 570,000 miles on it. Parts are wearing out. So reluctantly, I lifted my pedal off the metal and moved over to the slow lane. But now I'm healthier than in a long time

Another realization comes from the great Saipan exodus of 2008. Seems I have lost so many friends, either by them moving off-island or up to heaven, including my mother.

Because of other tragedies, I am acutely aware of how short and precious life is, and try to make each day as pleasant and joyful for others as I possibly can. "Love the one you're with" is what Crosby, Stills, and Nash sang. I would amend that to, "Love the ones you're with."

Bringing happiness to others for me is about as good as losing weight. They both make me feel good, and make me look forward to 2009.

If you wish to borrow my resolutions, please go ahead. And yes, they are free, the best kind of resolutions. Oh yeah, that reminds me: in 2009 I'm going to try to live as cheap as possible. How?By concentrating on doing things that don't cost anything, such as walking, eating less, and doing things for others. I got enough stuff already.

Hope I can make it thru the year because I already have my resolutions lined up for 2010. You probably can guess what they are.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	27	2	.931	_
New Jersey	14	14	.500	12 1/2
Philadelphia	12	16	.429	14 1/2
New York	11	16	.407	15
Toronto	11	17	.393	15 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	22	6	.786	_
Atlanta	18	10	.643	4
Miami	15	12	.556	6 1/2
Charlotte	10	19	.345	12 1/2
Washington	4	22	.154	17

Central Division

Cleveland	24	4	.857	_
Detroit	15	11	.577	8
Milwaukee	14	16	.467	11
Chicago	13	15	.464	11
Indiana	10	18	.357	14

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

New Orleans	16	8	.667	1/2
Houston	19	10	.655	_
San Antonio	18	10	.643	1/2
Dallas	16	11	.593	2
Memphis	9	19	.321	9 1/2

Northwest Division

Denver	18	11	.621	_
Portland	18	11	.621	_
Utah	17	13	.567	1 1/2
Minnesota	4	23	.148	13
Oklahoma City	3	26	.103	15

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	23	5	.821	_
Phoenix	16	11	.593	6 1/2
L.A. Clippers	8	20	.286	15
Golden State	8	22	.267	16
Sacramento	7	22	.241	16 1/2

Yesterday's Games

New Jersey 108, Indiana 107
Cleveland 99, Houston 90
Atlanta 99, Oklahoma City 88
Charlotte 80, Washington 72
Boston 110, Philadelphia 91
Miami 96, Golden State 88
Milwaukee 94, Utah 86
Detroit 104, Chicago 98
L.A. Lakers 100, New Orleans 87
Dallas 100, Memphis 82
San Antonio 99, Minnesota 93
Portland 101, Denver 92

NBA LEADERS

Scoring

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Wade, Mia.	26	262	205	750	28.8
James, Clev.	27	264	187	747	27.7
Nowitzki, Dall.	26	249	154	680	26.2
Bryant, LAL	27	257	163	706	26.1
Granger, Ind.	24	200	127	585	24.4
Harris, N.J.	24	170	207	571	23.8
Bosh, Tor.	28	228	198	661	23.6
Durant, OKC.	27	230	135	630	23.3
Roy, Port.	28	221	169	639	22.8
Johnson, Atl.	27	227	98	613	22.7
Carter, N.J.	27	212	134	605	22.4
Stoudemire, Phoe.	27	213	176	605	22.4
Jefferson, Minn.	26	245	87	577	22.2
Randolph, LAC	25	215	102	550	22.0
J. Terry, Dall.	26	207	84	552	21.2
Butler, Wash.	25	189	126	530	21.2
Gordon, Chi.	27	194	113	563	20.9
Anthony, Den.	25	178	127	513	20.5
Paul, N.O.	23	155	143	468	20.3
Mayo, Mem.	27	205	88	549	20.3

FG Percentage

	FG	FGA	PCT
Nene, Den.	156	256	.609
Perkins, Bos.	106	177	.599
O'Neal, Phoe.	134	226	.593
Okafor, Char.	148	253	.585
Bogut, Mil.	127	224	.567
Lee, N.Y.	160	283	.565
Millsap, Utah	172	305	.564
Howard, Orl.	178	316	.563
Gasol, LAL	173	309	.560
Stoudemire, Phoe.	213	381	.559

Rebounds

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Howard, Orl.	26	117	244	361	13.9
Camby, LAC	24	75	220	295	12.3
Biedrins, G.S.	29	126	218	344	11.9
Randolph, LAC	25	89	187	276	11.0
Okafor, Char.	28	110	195	305	10.9
Bogut, Mil.	26	90	188	278	10.7
Lee, N.Y.	27	75	212	287	10.6
Duncan, S.A.	27	76	202	278	10.3
Jefferson, Minn.	26	84	183	267	10.3
Bosh, Tor.	28	75	201	276	9.9

Assists

	G	AST	AVG
Paul, N.O.	23	271	11.8
Williams, Utah	16	156	9.8
Calderon, Tor.	26	229	8.8
Duhon, N.Y.	27	231	8.6
Nash, Phoe.	24	205	8.5
Kidd, Dall.	26	214	8.2
B. Davis, LAC	27	220	8.1
Rondo, Bos.	28	211	7.5
Billups, Den.	26	183	7.0
Wade, Mia.	26	181	7.0

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

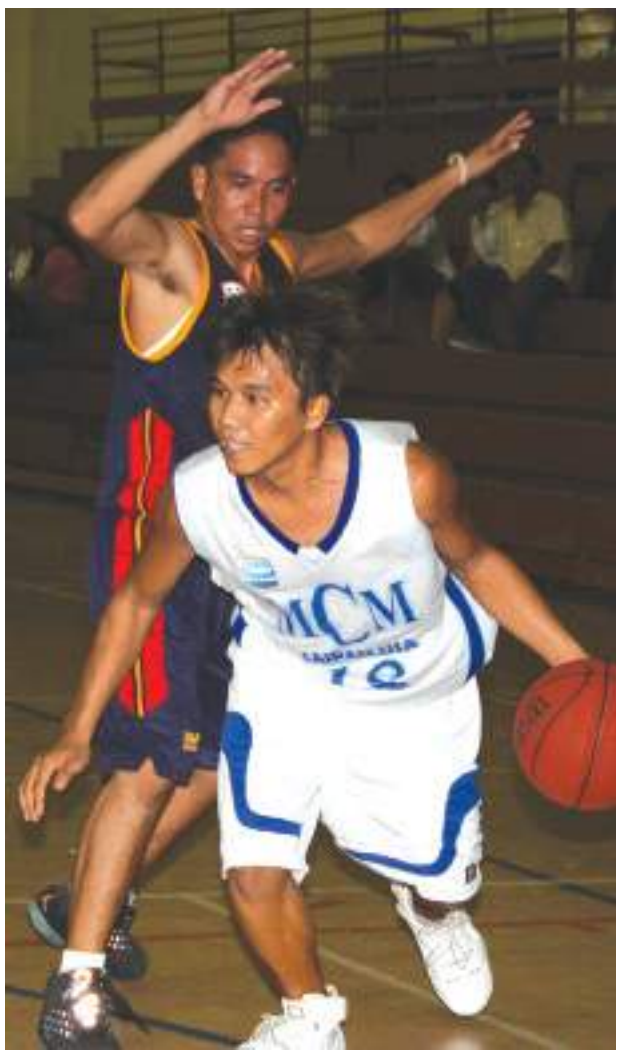
CIM-FCC Inter-Color Basketball League

Photos by ROSELYN B. MONROYO



Members of Daniel pose for a group photo after its 92-76 win over Isaiah in the finals of the CIM-FCC Inter-Color Basketball League-3rd Genesis Cup last week at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.


Daniel's Darwin Barbo, beats Jun Tabora in the battle for the loose ball.

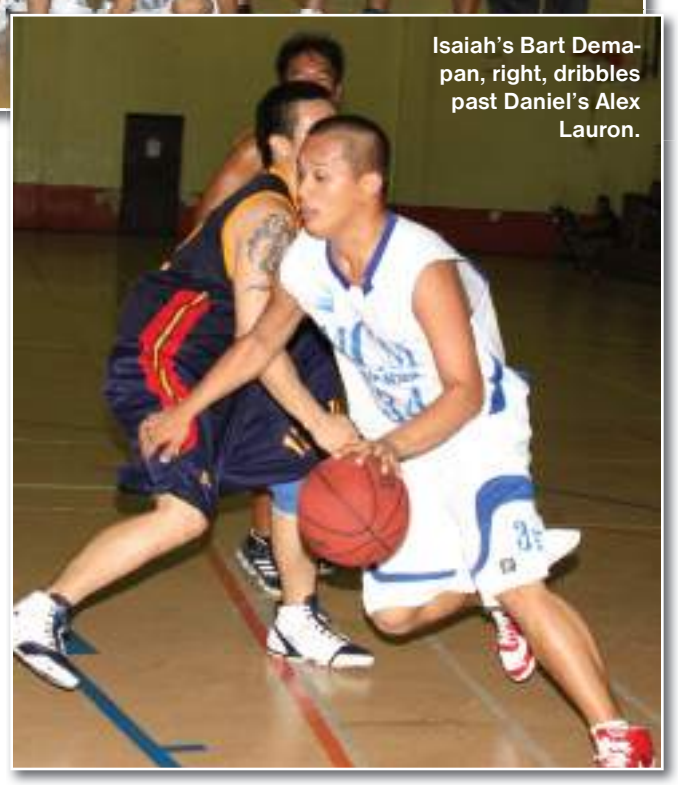

Isaiah's Jeremy Tamayo, rights, drives to the baseline against Daniel's Mike Umali.


Finals MVP Mike Umali, left, with league organizer Pastor Noel Puno.


Daniel Alex Lauron (12) goes for a shot against Isaiah's Jun Pantaleon, right.


White Capalad and Ernie Moises of Ezekiel receive a trophy and certificate of participation from league organizer Pastor Noel Puno.


Runnerup Isaiah with their supporters.


Isaiah's Bart Demapan, right, dribbles past Daniel's Alex Lauron.


Daniel's Brendo Talania (4) drives against a phalanx of Isaiah defenders.


Isaiah and Daniel players battle for the rebound.



Oleai enhances CNMI chances to host big events

The grandstand constructed on the south side of the Oleai Sports Complex track and field facility will add weight to CNMI's capability to host big tournaments.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Teixeira reportedly agrees to $180M Yankees deal



Keeping up an unprecedented spending spree, the New York Yankees added Mark Teixeira to their collection of pricey free agents when they reached a preliminary agreement on a $180 million, eight-year contract with the first baseman.

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CNMI jr. netters bring home 7 medals

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

CNMI junior tennis players Thea Minor, Christian Miller, and Rafael Jones returned from their three-week stay in New Zealand yesterday bringing home seven medals and an enriching experience.

Minor, a New Zealand second-timer, had the most fruitful stint among the three taking three doubles championships, one doubles runner-up, and two singles runner-up medals.

"It was an awesome experience, as I get to bring home more medals than last year," said Thea, who had only two medals in 2007.

"I think my first trip to New Zealand really helped me play good games in the 14-and-under division. I had a tougher time in the 16-and-under as I played against players who are taller and stronger than I am. But it was a good learn-

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO

From left, Rafael Jones, Thea Minor, and Christian Miller pose for a group photo following their arrival at the Francisco C. Ada International Airport yesterday. The three CNMI junior tennis players competed in New Zealand for three weeks.

Cuki happy with Trench Warz IX turnout



MARK RABAGO

Trench Tech president Cuki Alvarez interviews Trench Warz IX: The Annihilation celebrity referee Frank "The Crank" Camacho during a lull in the action.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Trench Warz IX: The Annihilation was a rousing success with the 11 action-packed mixed martial arts fights leaving the audience at the edge of their seats, according to Trench Tech president Cuki Alvarez.

"I was very happy with the event overall. It was a great turnout. We had 11 action-packed MMA bouts with Guam vs. Saipan and the first ever female MMA match," he said.

Alvarez also thanked the MMA-loving public for coming in droves to watch the event, which was held last Dec. 12 at the Royal Taga Hall of Saipan World Resort.

"Certainly I would like to say thank you to all the fans for supporting mixed martial arts and Trench Tech and coming out and watching Trench Warz IX! During these economic crisis, the best remedy for stress and tough, hard times is good old fashion entertainment and I am just happy to be able to bring the people of Saipan a healthy dose of excitement! Trench Tech is committed to continue bringing top caliber MMA events to the awesome fight fans of the CNMI for many years to come!" he added.

Alvarez also extended his kudos to sponsors of Trench Warz IX: The Annihilation "for all their untiring help and support the past four years."

He said the event wouldn't have been possible without the help of main sponsors MARPAC/Bud Light and Docomo Pacific. He also thanked Aquarius Beach Towers, Chalan Kanoa Beach Club, Budget Rent A Car, Island Equipment Rental, Master Construction, Hagu Next Sports Apparrel, Fokai International, 360 Revolving Restaurant, Power 99, Borderline, 6-7-Zero Rock Steady Shop, Hannam Market, and Mobil Kagman for sponsoring the Trench Warz IX.

Trench Warz IX: The Annihilation saw Marianas Elite's Kelvin "The

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OFF THE BENCH

By BOB COLDEEN
Special to the Saipan Tribune



Coldeen is a longtime journalist in the CNMI and is currently the news director of KSPN2

Resolution solutions

Have you made your resolutions for 2009? Mine were easy. I used the same from last year. And the year before that. And the year before that.

My resolutions were probably the same that many of you have: exercise more, eat and drink less, and lose weight. In 2008 I actually accomplished that, dropping 20 pounds from one year ago today.

Now my goal is to at least maintain that, and try to shed 10 more to get at my optimal fighting weight. That's a joke, folks, I'm not a fighter, I'm a lover!

Here's how I accomplished weight loss: I stopped playing competitive sports. I admit, that doesn't make much sense but allow me to explain.

On my 55th birthday I decided to shut everything down. I was playing Masters basketball, and after having a ton of fun one game, I would go on the disabled list for the next few games. I was playing softball, and after having great times, tore a hand ligament that resulted in a $5K operation. That's not the 5K I enjoy. I loved playing golf, but after one round, I could hardly walk the next couple of weeks.

Osteoarthritis suddenly entered my vocabulary. It's a bad word, especially for someone who has been so competitive and active for so long.

For the next couple of years, I sulked. I wanted to run and walking seemed so lame and tame by comparison. I didn't do much except watch others play. I sat around and gained weight which only added to my knee and back problems.

Then last year I decided to turn lemon into lemonade. I started taking regular three-mile walks. I started stretching and doing yoga. I adopted a no-alcohol Monday through Thursday policy. Ironically, I later discovered that people in Iceland love to drink, but only on weekends and there, anyone who drinks during the week is con-

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28 teams joining holiday caging

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The 2008 Annual Christmas Basketball Jam Festival has a record field with 28 teams competing in the youth caging that will kick off this Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Elias Rangamar of the Division of Sports and Recreation said the response from various clubs and schools is overwhelming.

"We got a very good number this year and I think this is the biggest in years. Schools and clubs even have to split the group into two teams to accommodate players who are eager to join the tournament," said Rangamar, who added they are holding separate games for male and female players.

Kagman High School's Francis San Nicolas is among those coaches who

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The Sixers' Joe Ada, left, drives against a Kontenders player during their game in the Rotary caging this year. The Sixers are among the 28 teams joining this weekend's Holiday Hoops at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.